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GAZA
Georgia Association of Zoning Administrators

From Research to Rooftops

Modernizing Zoning Framework for More Housing Choices

Anna Adamson, Flooring Capital Development Corporation
Jake Bearden, Dalton Engineering Consultants
William Johnston, MicroLife Institute

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MicroLife Institute

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Hamilton Village



Cottage Court Development



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GAZA
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APA
American Planning Association

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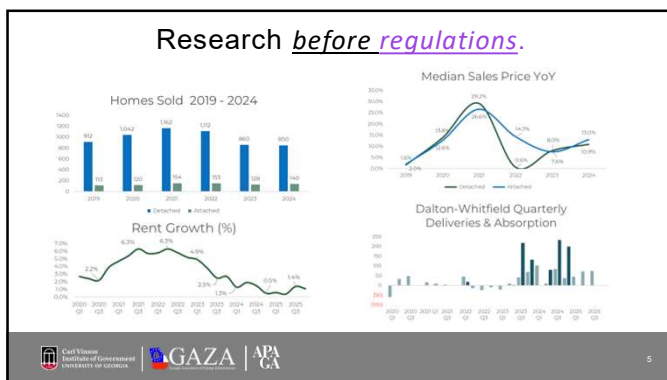
GAZA
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APA
 CA

Every Community Starts With One Question:

What kind of housing does our community *actually need*?

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2018: The Baseline

Believe Greater Dalton commissioned Whitfield County's first comprehensive housing study.

Recommendations:

- Encourage construction of for-sale housing
- Support renovation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock
- Encourage construction of new, high-quality rental apartments
- Continue to invest in Downtown Dalton

Bottom Line

Aggressive action was needed to improve the Greater Dalton housing market.

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2023: Observing Progress

Five years later we asked: *Have we made progress?*
Age. Access/Affordability. Concentrated Segments.

How does Greater Dalton meet this housing demand?

- Expanding Housing Choice
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Increasing Affordability
- Downtown Development



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We Were Ready When the Opportunity Arrived

AA1

By late 2023, Dalton:

- Understood Demand
- Convened Partners to Implement Solutions
- Identified a Potential Redevelopment Site



This matters.

When funding became available... *Dalton was ready.*



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January 2024

Governor's Rural Workforce Housing Initiative

Award: \$1.5 Million

Recipient: Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority

Funding Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Key Point!

The grant would transform years of housing research into real homes by making the missing-middle housing our community needed financially achievable.



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Slide 8

AA1 how about: We Were Ready When the Opportunity Arrived

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-10T18:51:42.718

Slide 9

AA1 [@Bayley Gable] Formatting help?!?

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T19:25:18.961

One Question Remained

Even with funding...*Did our current zoning framework support the housing our community needed?*

The answer was
no.



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Creating the Urban Planned Unit Development

Instead of forcing projects into outdated zoning districts... Dalton created a new one.

The U-PUD was designed to encourage:

- Walkability
- Urban infill
- Mixed housing types
- Neighborhood-scale redevelopment
- High-quality site design



This was not written for one development. It was written to implement a *housing strategy*.



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Why the U-PUD Was Different

Instead of listing ordinance language, explain the reasoning

Decision	Why It Matters
8-acre maximum	Encourages neighborhood-scale redevelopment
Urbanized Area only	Reuses existing infrastructure
Full development plan required	Gives neighbors certainty before rezoning
Residential focus	Keeps housing the priority
Limited commercial	Supports walkability without changing neighborhood character

Good zoning balances flexibility with predictability.



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Slide 11

AA1 [@Bayley Gable] can we add back in the pretty rendering on this slide?

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T19:25:04.788

AA1 0 [@Bayley Gable] picture needed here!

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T19:36:40.957

AA1 1 [@Bayley Gable] found the one i liked! just needs formatted help from you :)

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T19:45:11.680

Hamilton Village

The first major project using the U-PUD

Partners

- Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority
- City of Dalton
- Flooring Capital Development Corporation
- Proper Construction
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Mohawk Industries
- Steve & Tammy Herndon



The grant solved infrastructure. The U-PUD solved zoning. **Together** they made the *project possible*.

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The First Project Changed the Ordinance

Hamilton Village proved the concept, and it also exposed another opportunity.

We still could not build:
Homes oriented around a shared greenspace courtyard.

Instead of approving another exception...

We improved the ordinance.

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The Cottage Court Amendment

Purpose

- Modernize the UPUD zoning framework to allow Cottage Court developments.

Key Features

- Homes oriented around a shared greenspace courtyard.
- Individual homeownership with shared parking and pedestrian access.
- Permanent protection and maintenance of shared amenities.

Outcomes

- More housing choices.
- Walkable, neighborhood-focused design.
- More efficient land use and lower infrastructure costs.
- High-quality development standards maintained.



The ordinance became stronger because of the first project

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Slide 14

AA1 [@Bayley Gable] formatting okay?
Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T19:37:08.239

BG1 0 changed it up! what do you think?
Bayley Gable, 2026-08-11T22:01:18.780

Putting the Amendment to Work

MicroLife Cottage Court — now in final design

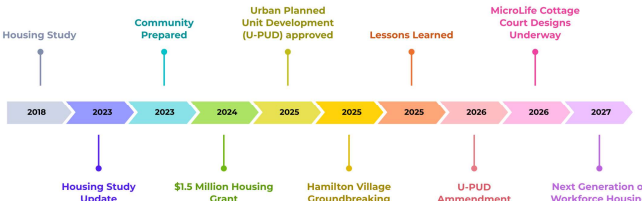


Zoning Directly Affects Affordability.



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Research → Funding → Zoning → Housing





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About MicroLife

The MicroLife Institute is a **mission-driven, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit housing developer** headquartered in Atlanta, GA. We are a hub that connects community members, policy makers, and industry professionals.

We **build stronger communities** through **housing development projects** and **educational programming** to elevate awareness of housing choice throughout the nation.





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Slide 17

AA1 Can we add Research-->Funding--> Zoning--> Housing at the top and keep the specific activity below?

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T15:11:44.307

BG1 0 How does this look? Also, did I get those years and dates correct?
Was not 100% sure...

Bayley Gable, 2026-08-11T17:53:27.531

AA1 1 @ bayley: "Urban Planned Unit Development Zoning District approved" not "Developed"

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T19:46:59.950

AA1 2 [@Bayley Gable] An Urban Planned Unit Development (UPUD) zoning text amendment adding a Greenspace Courtyard Subdivision option was formally approved in February 2026, not 2025.

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T19:49:32.034

AA1 3 [@Bayley Gable]Hamilton Village broke ground in 2025

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T19:50:37.099

AA1 4 [@Bayley Gable] please change Urban Planned Unit Developed to "Urban Planned Unit Development (U-PUD) approved"

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T22:51:00.270

AA1 5 @ U-PUD amendment approved

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T22:52:21.070

AA1 6 [@Bayley Gable] 2026- Microlife Cottage Court design underway

Anna Adamson, 2026-08-11T22:53:09.540

The 'Institute' Side of MicroLife

Community Engagement

Bringing Community into our design process from the beginning.

Helping spread missing middle ideas.

Design Charrettes, Town Halls, Missing Middle Safaris, and more...

Research & Zoning Reform

Identifying local housing needs & barriers.

Conducting Housing Assessments.

Zoning reform and advocacy.

Teaching & Education

Online curriculum and courses.

Articles and insights online.

Creative exercises like our "Nimby the Clown" children's book."

Events & Speaking

Keynote & panel discussions about housing diversity & missing middle ideology.

Tailored events to help spread ideas and advocate for change.

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Our Approach to Development

Naturally Affordable Development

Right sized homes & efficient, sustainable design.

Gentle Density at Neighborhood Scale

Shared use of land & infrastructure within existing context.

Increased Sense of Community & Interaction.

Walkability, spaces that encourage neighbors to interact.

More Diverse Options.

To accommodate shifting demographics and life stages.

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Missing Middle Housing

Detached Single-Family Houses Duplex, Side-By-Side + Stacked Fourplex, Stacked Courtyard Building Cottage Court Townhouse Multiplex, Medium Triplex, Stacked Live-Work Mid-Rise

Missing Middle Housing

• **Middle of the spectrum** between large single-family and mid- to high-rise multifamily

• **"Missing"** after being **outlawed by zoning** in many places; **illegal or difficult to build today**

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Better Density at Work.

How a 1 acre lot can yield a more diverse and naturally attainable solution.

- Right Sized, Fee Simple Homes
- Shared use of land
- Shared parking & Amenities
- Connected Walking Paths



Land cost: \$200,000
(1) 3000 sqft home: \$500,000
Cost Per Home: \$700,000

Land cost: \$200,000
(10) cottage homes: \$2,900,000
Cost Per Home: \$310,000



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The Cottages on Vaughan

Lot Size: 0.47 acres
Units: 8
Project Cost: \$2.2M
Funding Partner: Friends & Family
Sales Prices: 60-80% AMI (without subsidy)

The project that started it all for us - a pilot after helping then Mayor Ted Terry rework the Clarkston Cottage Ordinance. These 8 homes on less than 1/2 acre had a **1500 person interest list** and was awarded the **Urban Land Institute Jack Kemp Award for Excellence in Affordable & Workforce Housing** and **Atlanta Regional Commission Innovative Development Award**

VAUGHAN ST | CLARKSTON, GA | 8 UNIT COTTAGE COURT





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Lyons Cottage

Lot Size: 0.81 acres
Units: 10
Project Cost: \$2.9M
Subsidy Sought: \$500K
Target Sales Prices: 80-100% AMI

MicroLife and the **Georgia Conservancy** partnered to conduct a Housing Assessment for Toombs County, which identified an opportunity to develop a city-owned parcel in Lyons, currently occupied by a deteriorating structure.

The project will be in collaboration with the **City of Lyons** and **Lyons Development Authority**

159 E OGLETHORPE | LYONS, GA | 10 UNIT COTTAGE COURT/TOWNHOMES





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Active Projects in Development



Hammond Park Townhomes
ATLANTA, GA

9 Units on 0.42 acres
MLI Owned Lot
Partners: GA Office of Planning & Budget, Housing Plus
Total Budget: \$2.75M (\$2.75M ARPA Grant)
C of O obtained



Cottages on Cochran
UNION CITY, GA

9 Units on 2 acres
County Owned Lot
Partners: Fulton County, ANDP, Community Foundation, Reinvestment Fund
Total Budget: \$2.8M (\$1.5M ARPA Grant)
In Permitting



Cottages on Midway
DEKALB COUNTY, GA

18 Units on 2 acres
Privately Owned Lot
Partners: Nest Planning & Construction, Housing Development Corp, Decide Dekalb
Total Budget: \$5.8M
In Permitting



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The Cottages on Underwood

Units: 9

1Bd/1Ba: 1

2Bd/1Ba: 2

3Bd/2Ba: 2

- Parking Spaces: 20
- Shared Courtyard
- Patio/Truck T-Turn





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The Georgia Association of Zoning Administrators, also known as GAZA, was founded in 1985 to provide education, training and networking opportunities in order to support and promote professional development in zoning and related fields. GAZA has been created to be a resource specifically to the local planning and zoning professional throughout the state of Georgia.



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