

Summary of Georgia's Urban Redevelopment Act (O.C.G.A 36-61-1)

Purpose:

- Gives cities broad powers to redevelop blighted or threatened areas of the community.
- Allows communities to use eminent domain to work with property owners when specified public uses are needed to buy and assemble blighted property for revitalization and resale.
- Does not require a referendum.
- The required Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) is fairly easy and inexpensive to prepare and amend.
- Can be implemented either by a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) or a Redevelopment Authority appointed by the city.
- Encourages involvement of private enterprise/public private partnerships to redevelop neglected areas of the community.
- Permits use of tax exempt bonds for redevelopment purposes. These may be secured by loans and grants.
- Lets the public know what is being planned for the redevelopment area.
- Guides City investments in infrastructure to support redevelopment.
- Allows the City to negotiate variances and waive many requirements of its existing zoning and development requirements in order to achieve the optimum economic and aesthetic results in the redevelopment area.

Process:

- Draft the Urban Redevelopment Plan.
- Hold a public hearing.
- Adopt the plan.
- Appoint an organization (urban redevelopment authority or DDA, city redevelopment agency) to implement the plan.
- Implement the plan.

What is an Urban Redevelopment Plan?

- A general blueprint for redevelopment and targeting of public investments in the redevelopment area.

Required components of the Urban Redevelopment Plan:

- Statement that the URP is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan.
- Clearly defined boundaries of the redevelopment area (need not be contiguous).
- Explanation of negative conditions in the area necessitating redevelopment.
- The city's land use objectives for the area (types of uses, building requirements, zoning changes, and development densities).
- Description of land parcels to be acquired and structures to be demolished or rehabilitated.
- A workable plan for leveraging private resources to redevelop the area.
- A strategy for relocating any displaced residents.
- Any covenants or restrictions to be placed on properties in the redevelopment area in order to implement the plan.
- Public infrastructure to be provided – transportation, water, sewer, sidewalks, lighting, streetscapes, public recreational space, parking, etc. to support redevelopment of the area.
- A workable financial strategy for implementing the plan.