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City should approve Glynn Avenue guidelines

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City Commissioner Felicia Harris was justified last week when she expressed her frustration and dismay that a plan to revitalize Brunswick's central corridor along U.S. Highway 17 had again stalled.

The Glynn Avenue Design Framework is a comprehensive set of guidelines developed by city staff and the Savannah-based planning firm Symbioscity. It was crafted over a two-year period with input from stakeholders, community members and property owners. For the second time this year, the commission deferred action on the framework amid concerns from some property owners.

At its heart, the plan is an overlay district aimed at placing more deliberate guidelines on future development along the highway from the Sidney Lanier Bridge to Golden Isles Parkway. It restricts the size of buildings, lays out acceptable architectural styles and provides guidelines for organic, manageable growth.

Some property owners in the area are concerned about the plan. They believe it will hamper future growth and could scare off developers. Other stakeholders think the plan doesn't go far enough and should include more rigorous language about the Terry Creek Superfund site, a toxic tract of land that sits just about dead smack in the middle of the district.

The city and stakeholders are still hashing out their differences and trying to come up with a plan that will please everyone. We applaud this effort, but at the same time hope the commission will soon end this two-year process and implement common-sense guidelines for U.S. Highway 17. It's time to make a decision.

The past 20 years have shown us the status quo on U.S. Highway 17 is not working. Most people in the Golden Isles want to see a future Brunswick that embraces smart, pedestrian friendly growth. Most of us want to see the kind of revitalizations that have taken place in Columbus, Rome, Savannah and other cities across Georgia. These cities have accomplished this by implementing deliberate, carefully crafted plans that guide development.

It's time Brunswick has such a plan in place. If city commissioners fail to act now, who knows what could come later down the road. We do not want to be in a position where, one day, we say, "Boy, we should have done this or that 30 years ago."

We hope the few remaining stakeholders who have concerns will be able to find an amiable solution with the city.