

CASE STUDY

Field Trip Fridays

City/Municipality

City of Avondale Estates

Date.

8/10/2023

Project Overview

This case study presents a comprehensive analysis of two municipalities, The City of Avondale Estates and Stone Mountain Village, focusing on the topics of Historic Preservation, Character Areas, and Food/Entertainment. The study aims to provide a detailed understanding of these aspects in both cities, highlighting similarities and key differences. The information collected derives from site visits and thorough examination of published planning documents from both municipalities.



City of Avondale Estates

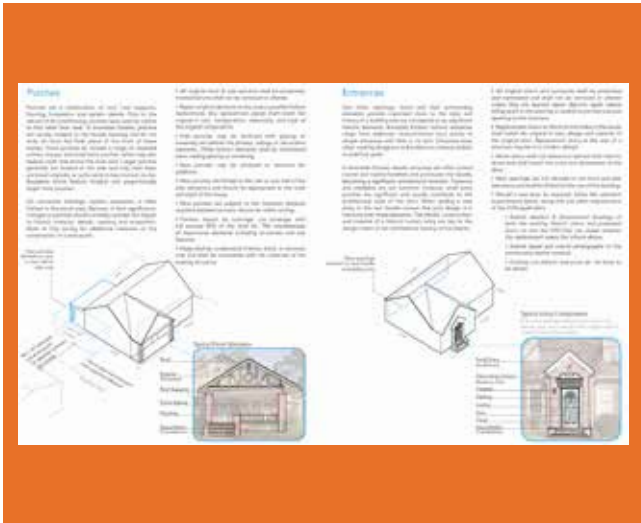
Phone.

404.480.0054

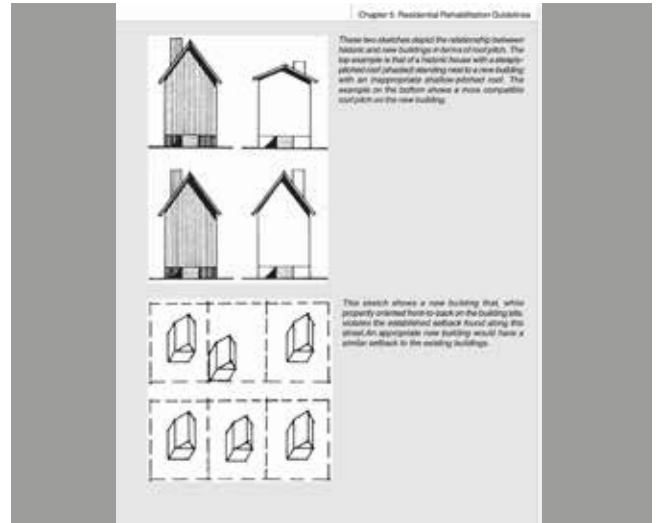
Website.

villageforwardinc.org

Address.



City of Avondale Estates



City of Stone Mountain

The Approach

- **Historic Preservation**

The team meticulously reviewed the Historic District Guidelines of both Avondale Estates (2020) and Stone Mountain Village. Site visits were conducted to capture visual examples of the execution of these guidelines, enhancing the comparative analysis.

- **Character Areas**

The analysis of character areas involved a review of zoning overlays from Avondale Estates' 2014 Downtown Master Plan Update and a comparison with Stone Mountain Village's 2020 Downtown Master Plan. On-site visits were essential in capturing photographic evidence for a detailed comparison of the character areas.

- **Food and Entertainment**

A field analysis approach was employed for the assessment of arts, food, and entertainment. The team counted storefronts in Avondale Estates and compared the count to the number of restaurants in Stone Mountain Village, providing a quantitative basis for comparison.

Situation

- In the context of urban planning and historic preservation, an examination of Avondale Estates' Downtown core and Stone Mountain's Downtown core unveils intriguing disparities and convergences. Avondale Estates and Stone Mountain, both encompassing approximately 0.17 square miles each, offer distinct perspectives on historic preservation guidelines, character areas, and urban amenities. The City of Lilburn has three parks totaling 150 acres within its limits, but it is only responsible for maintaining one 10-acre park, Lilburn City Park. The City of Stone Mountain maintains four parks totaling 28.6 acres and has Stone Mountain Park, which spans 3,200 acres and is within walking distance of its Downtown Core.
- **Historic Preservation Guidelines:** Avondale Estates has garnered esteemed National Register recognition for its Historic Districts, attributed to the meticulously preserved 1920s "Town Plan." This accolade encompasses a nuanced historical narrative, where contributing properties dating between 1921 and 1941 showcase diverse architectural styles, including Tudor Revival, English Cottage, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. Of note, Avondale Estates adroitly delineates its guidelines into two



City of Avondale Estates



City of Stone Mountain

Situation

designations: Preservation and Compatible, the former emphasizing properties of historical significance, and the latter accommodating newer structures without compromising cohesiveness. The clarity and accessibility of Avondale's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) guidelines are underscored by a comprehensive downloadable PDF document, which meticulously outlines dimensions, setbacks, and design elements, thereby offering a firm architectural framework.

- In contrast, Stone Mountain Village's historic preservation guidelines exhibit a distributed nature and are not as succinctly consolidated into a single downloadable PDF document. The guidelines encompass fifteen residential building types and six styles, including Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Craftsman, English Vernacular, and Cape Cod. For commercial buildings, the reference extends to four building types and two styles. However, Stone Mountain's architectural requirements are presented with a certain degree of vagueness, relying on terms such as complementing associated structures and preserving architectural integrity.

- **Character Areas, Art, Entertainment, and Culinary Diversity:** The 2014 Downtown Master Plan Update for Avondale Estates illuminates a thoughtfully delineated landscape comprised of six distinct districts, each bestowed with unique zoning overlays to nurture distinct characteristics. With designations such as Tudor Village, Mill District, Rail Arts District, Northside Avondale, Western Gateway, and Northern Gateway, Avondale's plan substantiates varying building heights, functions, and activities, thereby shaping a foundation for meticulous research into retail, gastronomy, and walkability.
- Avondale Estates' culinary and entertainment landscape is equally diverse, encompassing a roster of approximately 23 restaurants that span across five out of the six designated districts. Beyond the customary culinary establishments, Avondale demonstrates culinary ingenuity through an array of offerings spanning Mexican, desert/ice cream parlors, breakfast venues, coffee shops, Bar-B-Q joints, international cuisine, and fast-food outlets. The town further nurtures a well-rounded entertainment and service ecosystem, featuring a Music Hall, pet shops, veterinary services, salons, nail parlors, and light industrial enterprises, meticulously disbursed to obviate any



City of Avondale Estates



City of Stone Mountain

Situation

perceptible redundancy.

- Stone Mountain Village, conversely, establishes three distinct districts within its downtown ambit, encompassing the Gateway District, Village Center District, and South Main District. Although not as explicitly defined in terms of zoning overlays, the 2020 Downtown Master Plan for Stone Mountain encapsulates the essence of each district, encompassing their envisioned uses and character. Noteworthy is the Gateway District, serving as a pivotal entry point for visitors, replete with recommendations for enhancing offerings. The Village Center District emerges as a cultural and culinary hub, while the South Main District positions itself as a haven for professional services. The dining landscape in Stone Mountain Village, while notably featuring fewer establishments than its Avondale counterpart, spans an array of fine dining options, wine shops, breweries, pizza parlors, coffee venues, and a myriad of cuisines, further bolstered by an art gallery and theater.

- **Walkability:** Both Avondale Estates and Stone Mountain Village recognize the importance of walkability in fostering vibrant and cohesive downtown experiences. Avondale's Tudor Village, situated within a ¼ mile of several key districts, aligns with a 5-minute walk, promoting convenience and accessibility. Stone Mountain's downtown core is similarly walkable, with the majority of its area within a ¼ mile, consistent with Avondale's definition, creating an environment conducive to pedestrian engagement and community connectivity.

Conclusion

In summation, the similarities between the City of Avondale Estates and the City of Stone Mountain are striking. From their comparable downtown sizes and the nearly identical number of eateries to the shared vision of Downtown Districts in their Master Plans, these cities have much in common. Despite this, it's evident that there are notable distinctions in key areas. While Stone Mountain boasts a higher walk score, Avondale Estates stands out with its meticulous historic preservation guidelines, providing a clear path for its community. Ultimately, the differing quality of businesses and the overall aesthetic of their downtown cores remain the standout differences between these two remarkable cities.



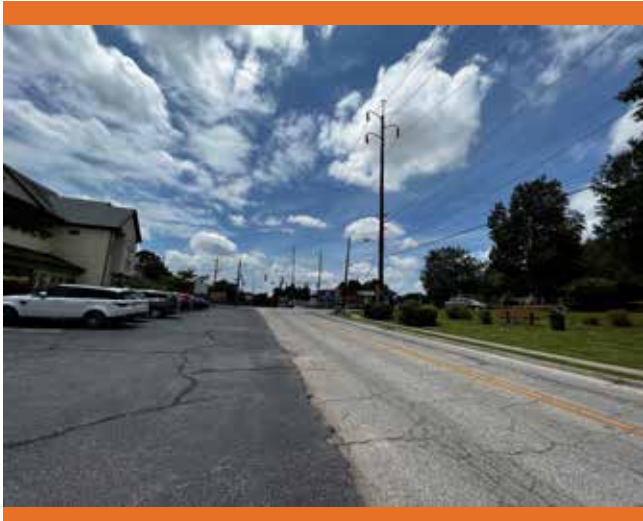
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Recommendations

- 1. Strategically Define the District:** Stone Mountain Village has a unique charm, and it's essential to create a comprehensive map that distinguishes between contributing and noncontributing properties within the district. This will help preserve the area's character while allowing for responsible growth.
- 2. Elevate Design Standards:** Establish clear and comprehensive guidelines for both contributing and noncontributing properties. These guidelines should include detailed dimensions, high-quality images, and captivating renderings, ensuring that all new developments align with the village's aesthetics.
- 3. Harmonize Architectural Styles:** To maintain a cohesive and appealing village atmosphere, carefully select the architectural styles that will take precedence in new construction. This mindful approach will contribute to the village's identity while allowing for creative yet harmonious growth.
- 4. Refine District Areas:** Building upon the foundation laid out in the 2020 Downtown Master Plan, Stone Mountain should refine its district areas, envisioning how each unique area can evolve while preserving its individual character. By implementing design guidelines and zoning overlays, we can nurture a diverse yet cohesive village scape. Leveraging the success of existing establishments and attracting new, consistent restaurants can further enrich the community.
- 5. Embrace Walkability:** Celebrate Stone Mountain's walkability by revitalizing vacant buildings and land, creating inviting spaces that encourage pedestrian activity. This approach not only enhances the village's appeal but also reinforces its friendly and accessible environment for residents and visitors alike.



Sources

1. City of Avondale's 2014 Downtown Master Plan Update
2. City of Stone Mountain 2020 Downtown Master Plan

