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NORTH AUGUSTA

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STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH HUSTAD

Augusta's medical district contains "literally billions of dollars of investment," the MCG Foundation's Ian Mercier said. But across from it are boarded-up houses and a census tract where more than 40% live below the federal poverty line.

Investing in the disinvested in downtown Augusta

BY ELIZABETH HUSTAD
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Editor's note: This article is the second in a two-part series addressing a gap in affordable housing in the Central Savannah River Area and possible solutions.

Seven years of "blocking and tackling," seven years of risky money and hard conversations.

But it paid off.

Seven acres of blighted property in Augusta's Bethlehem/Laney-Walker neighborhood were redeveloped into a gleaming apartment complex of some 220 units right at the junction where one of the city's most highly invested areas – its medical district – meets with one of its most highly disinvested areas, an area where more than 40% of its population lives below the federal poverty line.

The Beacon Station project was completed in 2019 and continues to fulfill its obligations



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH HUSTAD

Beacon Station, located at one corner of Augusta's medical district, was a \$37.5 million public-private investment that turned seven acres of blighted land into new housing.

Please see **INVESTING**, Page A4

Commission approves protested residential project

BY ELIZABETH HUSTAD
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A North Augusta neighborhood, three decades old and backing onto wetlands, looks likely to more than triple in size now that the city's planning commission recommended that council approve a preliminary plat for the proposed Wrenfield at Chanticleer.

And people are not happy.

About four dozen people were in the third floor gallery at the Municipal Building Wednesday night, Sept. 21, and prior to their vote commissioners heard more than 40 minutes of public comment that ranged from the mild and concerned to the accusatory and sarcastic.

"Let's be frank with each other. It's houses versus an ecosystem. Who usually wins" said one resident while another opened her comments with feigned delight over soon receiving a retention pond on her property.

The existing Chanticleer neighborhood of 57 homes would expand to 184 households if North Augusta's elected officials agree with the planning commission's recommendation.

There would be just one access point, that which already opens onto Martintown Road from the existing neighborhood and which would require those 127 new households to pass through the one neighborhood in order to get to the other.

The new development would also be North Augusta's only conservation subdivision, a special designation that allows the developer more latitude in order to work around topographical challenges.

Please see **WRENFIELD**, Page A3

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Inside

CALENDAR

Courage to Rise Fun Run to be held in downtown Augusta. **B2**

STATE

Mace opponent Andrews failed for months to disclose personal finances. **A3**

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