

Transportation Studies Bring Funding to Gwinnett

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The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) recently awarded \$85,000 in grants to aid in funding the transportation studies of four Gwinnett County groups. Grants were awarded to the City of Norcross, the Gwinnett Village and Gwinnett Place Community Improvement Districts (CID) and the City of Suwanee.

"The Gwinnett jurisdictions are undertaking excellent work focusing on redevelopment and new transit in the I-85 corridor and the ARC is happy to support these efforts," said Dan Reuter, land use division chief for the Atlanta Regional Commission.

The ARC awarded the City of Norcross \$35,000 for a study to address the parking needs in the growing downtown and to compliment the newly created Lillian Webb Park. The study will focus on current and future parking requirements in downtown Norcross; possible locations for a parking structure and lots; the effect growth and parking will have on downtown traffic; and a review of Lillian Webb Park in regards to pedestrian safety and the effect of creating one-way streets around the park.

"This parking study will address the last component of the 2001 Norcross Town Center LCI Study," said Steven Bush, economic development manager for Norcross. "We are excited to have this opportunity to continue our efforts to grow downtown Norcross."

The Gwinnett Village and Gwinnett Place CIDs applied jointly for assistance with their light rail transit (LRT) feasibility study and were awarded \$30,000 from the ARC. The study will examine the cost and possible routes for a LRT line on the I-85 corridor that would connect Norcross, Gwinnett Village, Indian Trail Road, Gwinnett Place and terminate at the Gwinnett Arena. The study will evaluate population density, travel patterns and connectivity to major activity centers along the corridor. Coupled with the ridership projections, these findings will allow the CIDs to develop a plan for successfully advancing the project.

"The I-85 corridor is one of the most congested corridors in the Metro region," says Chuck Warbington, executive director for Gwinnett Village CID. "Our goal is to transform the CID areas into urban centers, and in order for that transformation to be possible we have to think about alternative modes of transportation."

The City of Suwanee received \$20,000 for a Buford Highway transportation feasibility study to examine Buford Highway from McGinnis Ferry Road to the entrance of George Pierce Park.

Buford Highway bisects the City of Suwanee's Downtown area. The current design of the highway is not sensitive to the City's goals of making Buford Highway pedestrian friendly. The study is necessary step to ensure that Buford Highway will be a context sensitive pedestrian friendly design, while still accommodating current and anticipated vehicular traffic. If properly improved, Buford Highway will unite Suwanee's Historic Old Town Area with its new Town Center.

"We are excited to have the opportunity to address the challenges related to Buford Highway bisecting our Downtown area, said Josh Campbell," planning director for the City of Suwanee.

The ARC issued a total of \$204,000 in grants for LCI supplemental studies. Other groups that received LCI funding include: the City of Griffin, Spalding County, the City of Forest Park, the City of Monroe and the City of Palmetto.

For more information on the grants please contact Steven Bush, economic development manager for Norcross, sbush@norcrossga.net, 678-421-2023; Chuck Warbington, executive director for Gwinnett Village CID, chuck@gwinnettville.com, 770-449-6515; Joe Allen, executive director for Gwinnett Place CID, jallen@gwinnettplacecid.com, 678-924-8170. Denise Brinson, director of economic and community development for Suwanee, denise@suwanee.com, 770-904-3385.

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