

Community Improvement Districts: Models of Excellence in the Metro Region The Centers of Influence and Infrastructure

Over the past 25 years, Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) have emerged as significant centers of influence in the Metro Atlanta region. By utilizing self-imposed tax revenues from commercial businesses within their districts they are dramatically changing their communities in many ways. From bold new infrastructure improvements to traffic mitigation, private security and the transformation of commercial streets into pedestrian friendly corridors to the creation of new parks, trails and greenspace, CIDs are enhancing the urban and suburban landscape. These have improved the standard of living throughout the region and will continue to do so at a rapid pace, as evidenced by recent history.

However, the history of this transformation is surprisingly short, starting only in 1985, when then-State Representative Johnny Isakson and then-State Senator Roy Barnes pushed state legislation to allow for the creation of CIDs. The first CID was the Cumberland CID which formed in 1988 and just celebrated its 25th anniversary. Fifteen more have been formed since then, with the youngest, Tucker, coming into existence only a few short months ago.

Among other things, CIDs leverage private dollars to create public ventures. They return control to stakeholders, improve the quality of life in their districts and dramatically strengthen their tax base. Major corporations have taken notice of the impact of CIDs and have specifically chosen to locate or expand in areas supported by CIDs. Numerous notable companies such as:

- Cox Enterprises
- GE Energy,
- Home Depot
- Jacoby Development
- State Farm,
- BlueLinx and
- UPS, have all publicly cited the influence and importance of CIDs in their relocation or expansion decisions.

The CID structure is unique. While the board members are elected by the property owners, they serve as volunteers. Moreover, since the property owners pay additional taxes to fund CIDs, you could say that the Board members actually *pay* for the right to serve. They are truly dedicated stakeholders committed to making decisions that are in the best interest of the assets and the communities that they represent.

The Council would like to recognize each CID for working to make the Metro Region a better place to live, work and play by highlighting just a few of the contributions that each has brought to the region.

Cumberland CID:

Formed in 1988, the Cumberland CID is the oldest CID in Georgia. Over the past 25 years, it has leveraged \$100 million in investments to generate an estimated \$500 million in returns in the form of critical infrastructure spending through 60 capital improvement projects and is home to major corporations such as The Home Depot and The Weather Channel, among others.

