

Gwinnett Place CID cleaned up 29.7 tons of trash in 2014

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Businesses around Gwinnett Place Mall are betting that thinking green could lead to making more green.

The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District announced this week that it removed 29.7 tons of trash along 10 miles of roadway in 2014. It also removed 1,141 illegally placed signs.

The results came from a partnership the CID entered with Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful and Russell Landscape Group to clean up the area around the mall. Officials said the idea behind the partnership is that businesses in the district benefit if customers see a litter-free area when they pass through.

"There has been a lot of research that confirms that visitors quickly judge an area by its aesthetics," said Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful Executive Director Connie Wiggins in a statement from the CID. "The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District has done a fantastic job making sure that Great Gwinnett remains a clean, welcoming and thriving area."

CID officials have been making a push in recent years to clean up the area and make it more attractive to customers. They announced they have removed 100,000 tons of trash from roadways in the district since 2007. They have removed another 8.41 tons of trash and 315 illegal signs in the first three months of 2015.

They are also in the midst of a multi-phase streetscaping project that will improve the look of Pleasant Hill Road and Satellite Boulevard. New landscaping, lighting and sidewalks that make the area friendlier to walkers are being installed through the project.

CID Executive Director Joe Allen said it comes down to a simple goal: Fighting the broken window effect.

The theory is that one broken window isn't quickly addressed, it leads to more broken windows if it isn't addressed quickly. Eventually those broken windows lead to a downward spiral toward a blight-filled — and possibly crime-filled — area where people feel less safe.

"Once you fix those issues, then bigger and better changes will follow," Allen said. "By focusing on issues of maintaining the area's roadways, removing illegal signs and trash each day, installing thousands upon thousands of new plants, constructing streetscapes with pedestrian-scaled lighting and removing graffiti, the CID's Board of Directors believes that people will take notice and then take pride in the area."

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