

GPCID



Gwinnett Place CID officials planning major overhaul of mall area | VIDEO

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The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District has big plans for the Gwinnett Place Mall area that include a massive roundabout which contains a park and new waterfront park space and trails.

The CID released its ACTivate Gwinnett Place master plan, which calls for a redevelopment of the mall area to include more greenspace, as well as connectivity and transportation improvements. Executive Director Joe Allen pitched the plan to county government and business leaders on Tuesday during their tour of the Duluth, Suwanee and Sugar Hill areas.

ACTivate Gwinnett Place CID Multi-Modal Green Corridor



"We believe this is something that can move the needle on redevelopment, that strong source that moves us from where we are today to that next level of success for Gwinnett Place," Allen said. "I want you to know, county officials, you have a partner in the CID. We're here. We're willing to put our money where our mouth is. We're willing to move things forward together."

The master plan is the product of 12 months of work to get feedback from community stakeholder, CID businesses, members of the district's board of directors and county officials on how the area could be improved. The CID used funding from the Atlanta Regional Commission and the National Association of Realtors to pay for the plan, Allen said.

Gwinnett Place CID officials are now in the process of promoting the plan to the public and have released a two-and-a-half-minute video on YouTube to explain the plans for the area.

Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District Executive Director Joe Allen distributed this map to county government and business leaders this week to show proposed changes the CID wants to make to the Gwinnett Place Mall area as part of its ACTivate Gwinnett Place master plan. (Special Photo)

"The Gwinnett Place area has an opportunity to redevelop into a vibrant mixed-use community that can expand mobility options while stimulating economic growth," CID Board of Directors Chairman Leo Wiener said in a statement announcing the video. "Five catalyst infrastructure projects frame the overall Master Plan and will determine the future livability, connectivity and redevelopment potential of the area."

One of the most noticeable parts of the plan is the replacement of the existing intersection of Pleasant Hill Road and Satellite Boulevard with a large roundabout which will have a park, plaza

and small buildings in its center. The plan calls for some businesses which are right at the four corners of the existing intersection to be torn down during the construction process.

Allen touched on the roundabout lightly during general comments about planned transportation improvements in the CID, but he touched more specifically on the goal for the intersection in the ACTivate Gwinnett Place video.

"Not only does it move traffic more efficient, but it is an amenity," Allen said in the video.

Another key feature of the plan is the conversion of existing detention ponds on the southwest side of the mall into three lakes with an amphitheater and walking paths. Allen told officials on Tuesday the area has grown to the point where the ponds are not as useful as they were 30 years ago and no longer meet standards for detention ponds.

"If we can work together to expand the capacity of detention ponds, and at the same time turn it into a public amenity, that will help to do two things," he said. "One, it will help with the redevelopment of the area and the businesses in the basin that those detention ponds serve. That will help take the cost of storm water off the back of the developer who is coming in and trying to redevelop the property.

"The second thing is we can turn it into an amenity," he added. "That could become a gathering spot — something those hotels and others in the area can use."

Another feature that Allen highlighted in his pitch to county officials is a new walking trail which will connect the mall with McDaniel Farm Park through an elevated bridge. Allen said the trail and bridge would help promote connectivity in the area while providing a new amenity for business customers and residents.

The CID director said the district has already issued a request for proposals for a feasibility study that will look at making the trail and bridge a reality.

"I hear all the time from businesses that call Satellite Place office development their home, they say, 'You know what can look out and see that park, we just can't get to it,'" Allen said. "Wouldn't it be great if we could open up that park so it comes toward Satellite?"

Other components of the plan include the construction of a grand promenade on the northwest side of the mall property, additional greenspace at the mall and streetscape improvements along Mall Boulevard, Market Street and Gwinnett Place Drive.

Allen said the improvements are important because the CID views Gwinnett Place Mall as Gwinnett County's downtown district, and therefore a key part of the county's economy. It's also an aging area, and the CID director pointed out that refreshing of the area is needed to keep it attractive to businesses and customers alike.

"If we don't change how things are going, then how do we expect any type of different outcome if we don't have an external force that will move an area, or move an individual in a different direction," Allen said.