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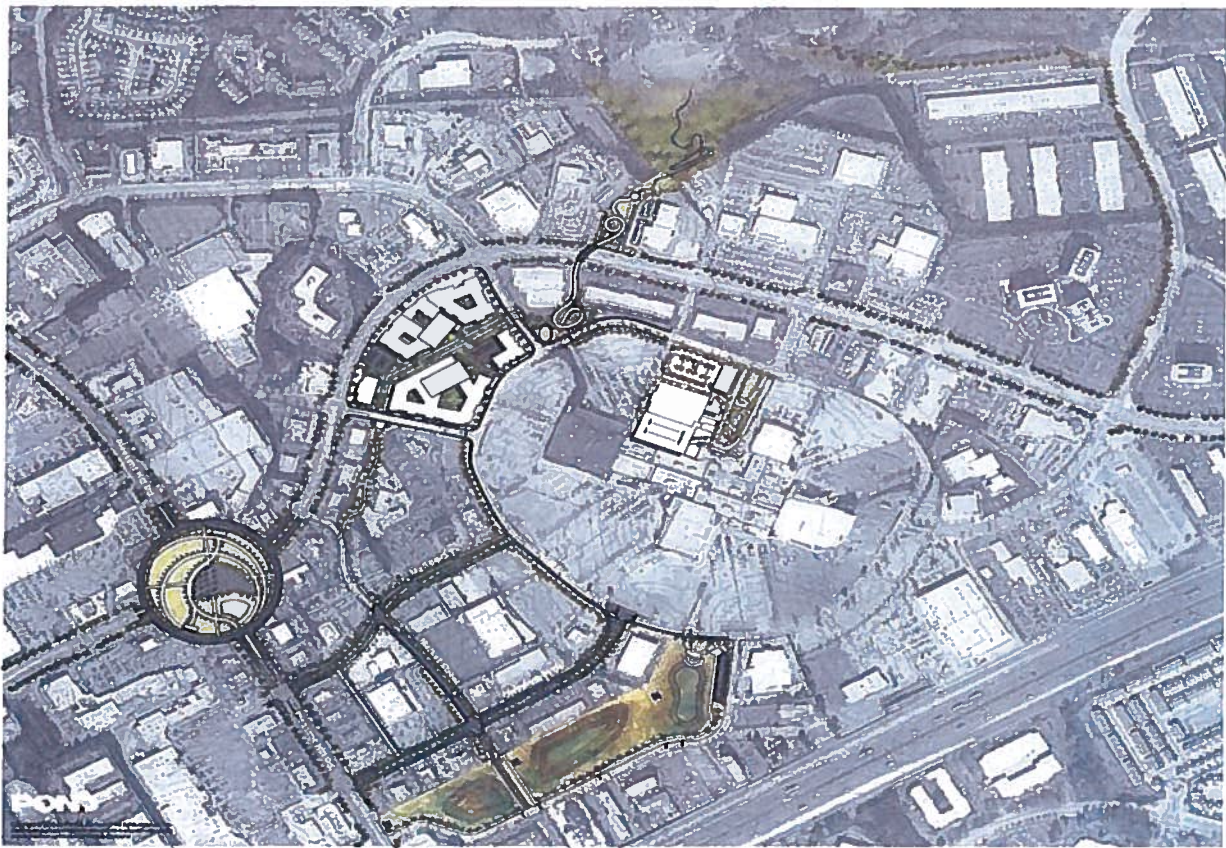
## County, CID partnering to study parts of ACTivate Gwinnett Place plan

By Curt Yeomans

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### Gwinnett Place CID Multi-Modal Green



This aerial image shows the full ACTivate Gwinnett Place master plan concept. County officials are partnering with the Gwinnett Improvement District to study the feasibility of a traffic circle at the intersection of Satellite Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road. The green corridor and grand promenade connecting McDaniel Farm Park with Gwinnett Place Mall. (Special Photo)

Gwinnett County officials will partner with the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District on a pair of feasibility studies that will help the CID move closer to implementing parts of its ACTivate Gwinnett Place master plan.

County commissioners approved the studies on Tuesday, while agreeing to contribute a total of \$75,000 to help the district pay for the reviews. The CID will contribute another \$112,500 to cover the remainder of the costs.

The studies will look at two key components of the multi-faceted CID's master plan for the Gwinnett Place Mall area. One part ponders reconfiguring the intersection of Satellite Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road. The other weighs creating a multimodal green corridor trail system that would connect McDaniel Farm Park to the mall.

"We're going deeper into (the plan)," CID Executive Director Joe Allen said. "We had the plan, the idea and the concepts and now we're really, on these two, starting to dig in deeper and getting into some real costs (and) getting into what is feasible and what is not."

The master plan, which was put together by Pond and Company for the CID, was unveiled last fall and immediately drew interest from county commissioners. They also said at the same time, however, that the high price tag — an estimated \$85 million to do everything — caused hesitation to give it a full green light.

Even the money approved for the studies on Tuesday was limited to paying only for professional services that are needed to conduct the study, and even then it is in concert with funding from the CID.

The county's contributions to the studies include \$25,000 for the intersection improvement study, while the CID is paying \$64,128 of its cost. Meanwhile, the county will spend \$50,000 for the green corridor study, compared to \$48,500 from the CID.

County documents show the county will make its contributions to the studies in the form of reimbursements to the district. The money will come from the 2014 SPLOST fund.

The studies have already been kicked off, Allen said, and the CID hired AECOM to conduct the intersection study, and TSW Planning to do the green corridor study. The goal is to have each study completed by sometime early this summer, if not in the late spring, he added.

The studies will end up looking at two of the biggest construction projects in the initial master plan concept for ACTivate Gwinnett Place. One is the massive traffic circle, which would be similar to a roundabout, with a small park in its center. It's a complicated and radical change for that intersection, and Allen has said in the past that it might be too difficult to do.

He repeated those sentiments on Tuesday.

"It's an idea, but can it be done? Is it feasible? Is it realistic," Allen said.

The other proposed construction project, which will likely be looked at as part of the green corridor study, is a pedestrian bridge that people walking along the trail would use to safely cross Satellite Boulevard by the mall. Allen said the full corridor would wind from Satellite Boulevard, to Commerce Avenue and then over to the park.

The study will also look at the scope of a proposed, tree-lined grand promenade gathering spot next to the mall as part of its look at the green corridor

"What Pond put together, for example, for McDaniel Farm Park (in the master plan) for the connectivity — is that the right place? We don't know," Allen said.

Gwinnett Place officials are moving forward with other parts of the master plan that don't require additional studies, though. Allen said the CID is looking for a designer to come up with plans for streetscaping and improvements on Gwinnett Place Drive and Mall Boulevard.

Allen said funding for construction has not been put in place yet, but the CID is getting its ducks in a row so it can be ready to go when it seeks that funding.

"We're going to go ahead with design so we can say, 'Hey, here it is,'" Allen said. "These other two (the intersection traffic and the green corridor) are going to be a lot more complicated, so we want to go ahead and say 'OK, we've got an idea. Let's see if that idea truly has merit.'"

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