

GWINNETT MARKET REPORT

Gwinnett CIDs expand plans for 2017

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Improvements to road transportation infrastructure and updates to master plans have been at the top of the project lists of most of Gwinnett County's Community Improvement Districts this past year, with 2017 promising a continuation of this focus.

According to the **Gwinnett Chamber**, a Community Improvement District (CID) is an association of property owners in a defined area who voluntarily tax themselves in order to fund improvements within the district's boundaries. "CIDs seek to improve business development opportunities and enhance property values by developing and promoting coordinated transportation and community character developments to benefit property owners, business owners and residents in their specific district."

Focusing on Pleasant Hill Road and surrounding areas, the **Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District** is the county's largest such organization. And it got even larger in 2016, with Gwinnett County approving an expansion encompassing six land parcels in Duluth with a total fair market value of almost \$27 million. This brought Gwinnett Place CID's membership to 245 commercial properties, with an aggregate value of some \$617,211,400.

Walkability emphasis

Creating a walkable environment with sidewalks, streetscaping, and connectivity to green space in the area around **Gwinnett Place Mall** is a major focus of Gwinnett Place CID.

"Gwinnett Place was a perfect example of the auto-centric suburban mall that was very successful 20 years ago. But



Joe Allen

now, people want something different," said Joe Allen, executive director of Gwinnett Place CID.

The Gwinnett Place Mall/Satellite Boulevard area boasts Gwinnett County's highest concentration of office-based businesses, Allen said, "and these folks are telling us they want to be able to get out and walk, which is why the CID is so involved in trying to help accelerate the transition [of that area] into a more walkable, dense, green, sustainable type of community."

Creating this environment is the focus of Gwinnett Place CID's "Activate Gwinnett Place" multi-modal green corridor initiative. Building upon a 2012 Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) funded in part by the **Atlanta Regional Commission**, the 2015 plan identifies catalyst projects for investment to improve transportation options, connectivity and livability through green spaces and infrastructure changes.

2016 was a year for doing the necessary feasibility studies and initial design planning for key elements of the effort, Allen said. These include a "grand promenade" trail network; an iconic bike and pedestrian bridge connecting the mall area with nearby McDaniel Farm Park, a 134-acre restored, 1930s-era farm; intersection and roadway improvements; and storm-water management solutions that can also serve as a public amenity.

Intersection improvements designed to enhance traffic flow are underway at Pleasant Hill Road and Gwinnett Place Drive, with another such project slated to get underway by the end of this year

at Pleasant Hill's intersection with Club Drive. In 2017, work should begin on similar projects on Venture Drive at its intersections with Day Drive and Steve Reynolds Boulevard. Also next year, construction plans should be completed for streetscaping projects to be implemented in 2017 and 2018 along Pleasant Hill Road and Satellite Boulevard.

International Nature

At **Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District**, one of the most critical areas is the Indian Trail/Lilburn Road corridor, according to Executive Director Marsha Anderson Bomar.

The CID worked on updating an LCI study of that corridor during 2016, she said.



Marsha Anderson Bomar

"We're looking at things like how to encourage land use changes, densification, and housing projects," Bomar said. "We have a lot of aging apartment stock here, so we are looking at ways to stimulate some residential development accommodating higher-income households."

Gwinnett Village CID is also preparing for a 2017 update to its existing Jimmy Carter Boulevard LCI, according to Bomar. A common element of both studies "is looking for ways to celebrate and enhance the international nature of our community, and turn that into a major asset," she said.

At the **Lilburn Community Improvement District**, where the anchor is the U.S. Highway 29 corridor, 2016 was a year of working to complete design plans and related studies for traffic signal and lane improvements to the highway's

intersections with Ronald Reagan Parkway, Rockbridge Road and Jimmy Carter Boulevard, said Emory Morsberger, executive director of the organization.

Lilburn CID and adjacent CIDs are also working together to plan for the transportation impact of **Georgia Department of Transportation's** \$1 billion, three-year redo of the I-285/Georgia 400 interchange, according to Morsberger.

"When the Georgia 400 project begins this winter, and 285 becomes more congested as construction progresses, we expect to see about a 20 to 25 percent traffic increase flow in the next ring out," including Mountain Industrial/Jimmy Carter boulevards to Holcomb Bridge Road, said Morsberger.

Morsberger also said the CID is working in conjunction with Gwinnett County in improvements/upgrades to downtown Lilburn, utility sidewalk, and street improvements; and appearance, sidewalk, landscaping, signage, and other improvements in the area around BAPS Mandir Hindu Temple, the largest Hindu temple outside of India, as well as Gwinnett County's No. 1 tourism destination.

Tennis complex redevelopment

The big project on tap at **Evermore Community Improvement District** is demolition and redevelopment of the 27 acres comprising the 1996 Olympic Tennis complex in Stone Mountain, according to Executive Director Jim Brooks.

And, in the area surrounding the complex, "We have about 225 acres there that are ripe for development, and the CID could assemble that if there is a developer that needs more than the 27 acres we already have," said Brooks. Work has also been completed this year on an initial phase of a 4.2-mile collector road running north of, and parallel to, U.S. Highway 78.

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