

Gwinnett Daily Post

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Business group proposes park beneath power lines

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Hulon Kennedy, right, with his son Wesley, talks about where the proposed Sugarloaf Parkway extension will cut through their pro

DULUTH — When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.

That could be the mantra for a business group that wants to create a “pocket park” beneath towering power lines that cut a broad swath through the Gwinnett Place commercial district.

Officials with the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District have met with county officials and Georgia Power to talk about putting a walking trail and benches around a stormwater pond in the utility corridor.

Strung between massive towers, the power lines run beside Gwinnett Place Mall before passing over Pleasant Hill Road on their way toward Atlanta.

The large stormwater detention pond is located in the corridor beside the mall, and it and about 11 acres around it could be upgraded and made to look better, said Gwinnett Place CID board member Mark Williams.

“We’re coming up with a master plan for a park so we can build one,” said Williams, who lives in the nearby Cardinal Lake subdivision.

More recreational amenities are needed in the business district, Williams said.

“There’s a lot of people that work in the area and take lunch breaks, and it’s dead property right now,” Williams said. “They could take a break and enjoy a park atmosphere.”

Mixed-use redevelopment is also expected in the Gwinnett Place district, and the park would accommodate residents in the condos and other dwellings that will eventually be built, Williams said.

The intent is for developers to voluntarily help pay for the park since it would benefit their projects, Williams said.

A Gwinnett County parks official said a Gwinnett Place pocket

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park is in the early discussion stage, and the county is only lending its expertise to the business district.

"Nothing has been decided on any of that yet," said county Parks and Recreation Project Administration Director Grant Guess.

About 11 acres bordered by Market Place and Venture Drive are the focus of the self-taxing district's attention, Guess said.

To make a park work, some land that is not below the power lines will be needed, Guess said.

There has also been talk of building a multi-use trail linking the mall to a nearby Gwinnett Transit bus center and McDaniel Farm Park off Old Norcross Road.

The Gwinnett Place CID is composed of commercial property owners who tax themselves and use the money for improvement projects.

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