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What will heal Gwinnett Place retail district?

By [Bill Allen](#) | Wednesday, November 28, 2007, 11:39 AM

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An article in the AJC recently said that the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID) was sending voice messages from Executive Director Joe Allen to 10,000 homes around the west Gwinnett County retail district with exhortations to "discover the Gwinnett Place area again." The purpose is to improve business conditions for shopkeepers there

Gwinnett Place has been hurting as some stores and customers have migrated to new, bigger, fancier locations at the Mall of Georgia, Discover Mills and outdoor shopping destinations, such as The Forum in Norcross and The Avenue Webb Gin near Snellville. Two other significant factors that are not mentioned in the story were the increased crime rate in the area, and the poor flow of traffic in the vicinity.

The area at Gwinnett Place Mall and Pleasant Hill Road is akin to a morbidly obese person moving blood through cholesterol clogged veins and arteries. Too many traffic lights and poor planning created the blockages that interrupt the flow of blood to the area.

Because the blood cannot flow to vital areas of the body, healthy parts began to decay and become infected. Because it has been so hard to move people into Gwinnett Place Mall and Venture Mall, healthy businesses have fled and been replaced by crime and pestilence.

The CID is the doctor, summoned by the ailing patient to address the years of neglect, hoping that it isn't too late for a cure, or at least to become healthier. The CID is trying and has made some improvements. I give them a tremendous amount of credit. I hope the CID is enough.

The condition of this "morbidly obese patient" will more than likely require a team of specialists. More active participation will be required by the Gwinnett County Commissioners and the Department of Transportation, who will probably have to do some reconstructive surgery on Pleasant Hill Road to improve the flow of traffic. In addition, the Gwinnett County Police Department will be the antibodies to fight the infection of crime. The police have increased their presence, and that has certainly helped to keep the patient alive.

It would have been much simpler if a healthy regimen was practiced by the area to begin with. Traffic on Pleasant Hill is a nightmare. I'm not telling you anything that you don't already know. The powers that be could have easily seen from Jimmy Carter Boulevard and U.S. 78 in Snellville how bad traffic congestion and overdevelopment would restrict the flow of business in the area.

Like an obese person, though, it was easier to eat and eat and not think of the consequences. Now, the area has to be fixed before it's too late, and the patient dies.

What suggestions can you offer to help improve the area?

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