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Study: Traffic keeps people from mall area

By Arielle Kass
Staff Writer

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DULUTH - A third of county residents who live more than five miles away from Gwinnett Place Mall said they have never heard of the Gwinnett Place area.

But those who do know about the mall, and the many shops surrounding it, say that more than anything else, traffic is what keeps them from heading there.

Although leaders in the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District worried that perceptions of crime were driving people away, that turned out not to be the case.

Just 6 percent of the people who answered a CID-sponsored survey counted safety concerns as the reason they don't come to the area more often. Traffic, access to closer shopping options and a long distance accounted for the reasons 56 percent of people avoid Gwinnett Place.

"At some level, all of us operate under conventional wisdom," Landmark Communication President Mark Rountree said. "We're operating a little bit under a misconception in Gwinnett County."

Rountree, whose company conducted the poll, also said more than 75 percent of respondents said they did not know anyone who had been the victim of a crime in the Gwinnett Place area.

Rountree told members of the CID's Board of Directors on Wednesday that they should focus on traffic solutions to improve the area, like the new bridge on Pleasant Hill Road that the district is lobbying for.

"It is just all about traffic," he said. "It's not that people don't care about public safety, it's that they may be satisfied with it."

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