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Six Communities Receive Supplemental ARC Smart Growth Grants

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(ATLANTA - May 22, 2008)

The **Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)** has selected six communities to receive Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Supplemental Study funding totaling \$220,000. The LCI program promotes quality growth by encouraging greater mobility and livability within existing centers and corridors.

The communities that will receive the smart growth grants are:

- **Cobb County**, to manage access on the Austell Road corridor
- **Buckhead**, to expand zoning of its activity center
- The **City of Griffin**, for a comprehensive parking study within the Historic Downtown District
- **Gwinnett Place CID**, to develop a parking management plan at Gwinnett Place Mall
- **Gwinnett Village CID**, to perform a tax-allocation district feasibility study for the Jimmy Carter Boulevard corridor
- The **City of Holly Springs**, to study a multi-use trail and bicycle facilities for the Holly Springs Town Center.

The award-winning LCI program was created in 1999 to help local jurisdictions better link transportation improvements with land use development strategies and create sustainable, livable communities that help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Some communities seek grants from the LCI Supplemental Study Program to help bridge the gaps between plan development and implementation. Once the studies are completed, communities are eligible to apply for additional funding to implement their LCI plans.

"The region's LCI communities have shown great commitment to developing innovative plans, but sometimes additional studies are needed to implement those plans. That's where the LCI Supplemental Study Program comes in," said Dan Reuter, Chief of ARC's Land Use Division. "Community by community, the LCI program has helped reshape metro Atlanta in a positive way."

Since the first LCI grants were awarded in 2000, more than 63,000 residential units, 11 million square feet of commercial space and 40 million square feet of office space are either planned, under construction or complete in these areas. Region wide, 33 percent of all new office space has been built within LCI areas. And, LCI areas have attracted 3.7 percent of all new residential

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units and 10.5 percent of all new commercial development built in the region.

The goal of the LCI program, created in 1999, is to help local governments devise strategies that reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality by better connecting homes, shops and offices; enhancing streetscapes and pedestrian amenities; and improving access to transit options. With this latest round of grants, LCI has assisted 94 communities with more than \$140 million in grant awards.

Please visit www.atlantaregional.com/LCI for more information about the Livable Centers Initiative.

2008 SUPPLEMENTAL LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE STUDIES

Austell Road Corridor (Cobb County)

Access Management Plan

Contact: Laraine Vance, Planning Division Manager, Dept of Transportation, 770.528.1650
(\$50,000 ARC Funding + \$50,000 Local Match)

Austell Road functions as a principal urban arterial located in southwestern Cobb County. Along the corridor there are a variety of commercial and residential land uses that are located on both sides of Austell Road, which is divided by a raised median. Most of these land uses have individual driveways that provide vehicular access from the roadway. These conditions create conflicts between vehicles conducting "through" movements and vehicles entering or exiting the roadway. In recognition of these issues and the needs associated with them, this LCI Supplemental Study will develop a detailed, parcel level plan to implement the Access Management Plan policies included in the Austell Road Corridor LCI Study. These access management methods are designed to improve operational efficiency of the roadway without adding lane capacity.

Buckhead Activity Center (Buckhead CID)

SPI-9 Expansion

Contact: Scotty Greene, Executive Director, 404.842.2683
(\$50,000 ARC Funding + \$50,000 Local Match)

The Buckhead LCI Study identified the Buckhead Village as one of the primary areas of interest and outlined a concept plan for its revitalization. As part of this initial study, it was noted that the existing Special Public Interest District currently covering the Buckhead Village had become outdated and needed a significant overhaul to become more comprehensive in size and scope. The original LCI study action plan specifically called out the need to revise the SPI district and comprehensive development plan to promote mixed use, mid-rise development, improve visual character and parking management and to develop a comprehensive streetscape program for the village. The LCI Supplemental Study will produce a new SPI zoning ordinance that will guide future development to ensure that it happens in a manner consistent with local and city comprehensive plans. This effort will capture the community vision helping to further unite community and civic organizations with the development community.

Griffin Town Center

Downtown Comprehensive Parking Study

Contact: Adam Causey, Executive Director, Downtown Development Authority, 770.233.2901

(\$20,000 ARC Funding + \$20,000 Local Match)

The City of Griffin LCI Supplemental Study will prepare a comprehensive parking study within the Historic Downtown District. This study will analyze the location, future needs, accessibility, design and safety of existing parking within the downtown area. The resulting Griffin Downtown Comprehensive Parking Study will identify improvements that can be addressed by the City and private development to ensure an adequate supply of parking, in appropriate locations, with quality and safe design. The resulting recommendations and ultimate plan implementation will support downtown vitality and economic sustainability while enhancing the overall transportation system for the Griffin town center.

Gwinnett Activity Center (Gwinnett Place CID)

Gwinnett Place Parking Management Plan

Contact: Joe Allen, Executive Director, Gwinnett Place CID, 678.924.8170

(\$30,000 ARC Funding + \$30,000 Local Match)

In 2001, Gwinnett County completed an LCI study that spurred several initiatives, including the creation of an "Activity Center" located around the Gwinnett Place Mall. The goal of this study was to create a new form of community in the heart of Gwinnett – one that is designed with a balance of places and activities for its people. This supplemental study will create a supporting parking management plan that focuses on feasibility and citing recommendations. The plan will address issues of shared parking, deck structures and pedestrian/ bike connections, as well as explore incentives for developers and businesses. The parking management plan will produce a graphic master plan that illustrates its findings. Furthermore, it will integrate information and trends identified in previous studies to create a cohesive and connected plan that continues to maintain the vision of the original LCI study.

Jimmy Carter Boulevard Corridor (Gwinnett Village CID)

TAD Feasibility Study

Contact: Chuck Warblington, Executive Director, Gwinnett Village CID, 770.449.6515

(\$45,000 ARC Funding + \$45,000 Local Match)

The Jimmy Carter Boulevard Corridor LCI study was completed to identify necessary land use and transportation improvements to revive this aging corridor. One of the underlying themes indicated throughout the LCI study was the need for investment in the transportation infrastructure to relieve traffic congestion, increase vehicle and pedestrian safety and spur positive economic change. As indicated in the LCI five-year action plan, well over \$70 million of transportation improvements were identified within this corridor. It has also become abundantly clear that funding of these projects will be a major hurdle. The purpose of this LCI Supplemental Study is to conduct a Tax Allocation District (TAD) Feasibility Study that will outline available funding options and make the case for adoption of a TAD with the distinct purpose of funding the needed transportation improvements in this area.

Holly Springs Town Center

Multi-Use Trail & Bicycle Facilities Study

Contact: Robert Varnell, Planner, 770.345.5536

(\$25,000 ARC Funding + \$25,000 Local Match)

Over the last few years, and particularly since the completion of the LCI study, the historical center of Holly Springs has again begun to emerge as a civic and social destination. Businesses are returning to the historical retail centers and homes, providing an eclectic and attractive place for residents and visitors alike. To support this revitalization, the LCI study emphasized the need to adequately plan for multiple transportation modes to get to, and travel within, the town center.

With this supplemental study, the City of Holly Springs will develop a Multi-use Trail/Bicycle Facilities plan to address facilitating connectivity within the study area, identifying opportunities and locations for Multi-Use Trails and Bicycle Facilities and priorities for the future development in relation to transportation corridors, including the new town center.

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the official planning agency for the 10-county Atlanta Region, including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties as well as the City of Atlanta and 66 other cities. The Atlanta Regional Commission serves as a catalyst for regional progress by focusing leadership, attention and planning resources on key regional issues.

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