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Cityscapes

EVERMORE CID - Park Place becomes the center of activity

Drawn from the recommendations of the Park Place Activity Study led by the Evermore Community Improvement District (CID) in early 2007, a community of residential, commercial, office and light industrial developments within the CID formed the Park Place Community Association (PPCA) to invigorate and enhance the community.

The study focus area, the Park Place Activity Center, is a portion of the Evermore CID centered on the Rockbridge/ U.S. 78 intersection and extends from the DeKalb County line on the west to Stone Drive on the east. Several years ago the City of Snellville, the eastern anchor community within the Evermore CID, participated in a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study that generated revitalization, expansion of green space, and traffic improvements. The CID study of the Park Place community follows the LCI model.

The Park Place Activity Center study identifies potential opportunities to provide a vibrant future for Park Place, the western anchor community within the Evermore CID. Several issues were recognized as important to the study area outside of the CIDs primary focuses - transportation and economic development.

“The Park Place Community Association will act as the lead agency advancing the goals toward accomplishing other community improvements such as neighborhood organization and revitalization, community maintenance initiatives, school support, and other community needs, not only the transportation and economic development improvements,” says Brett Harrell, executive director of the Evermore CID.

The PPCA, which covers several neighborhoods beyond the study area, will also service the Stone Mountain portion of Gwinnett County.

Comprised of representatives from individual businesses, homeowner groups, churches and other community organizations along with support from the Evermore CID, the association's main goals include reinforcing the community's image as a business and service destination of choice and using public-private partnerships to foster innovative redevelopment of housing and retail. Traffic management, design guidelines, clearly defined gateways and a future real estate market study are

projects the Park Place Community Association (PPCA) hopes to tackle.

“The Evermore CID intends to be an active member of the PPCA. The CID will assist with communication efforts, identifying business partnerships, and facilitating improvements by partnering with various agencies in support of the PPCA initiatives,” says Harrell.

A request from the CID to the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners to formally adopt the study to provide the necessary governmental support may be acted on before the end of the year.

Another project the Park Place Activity Center study has inspired is an intersection improvement project at Rockbridge Road and East Park Place which is currently underway.

– *Kimberly Strong*

Gwinnett Village CID - MARTA/Gwinnett reopen expansion plans

In 1990, Gwinnett County voters soundly defeated the proposed expansion of MARTA into their county. More than 16 years and hundreds of thousands of hours mired in ever-worsening traffic congestion later, the Gwinnett Village CID in partnership with MARTA is nearing completion of a study exploring the possibility of expanding the system into the county.

Approved and funded by both the MARTA and GVCID boards in December 2006, the \$100,000 study examines possible routes for a ten-mile extension of the northeast rail line. The Gwinnett Place CID, home to a potential stop at Gwinnett Place Mall, contributed \$10,000.

MARTA's 1990 plan for expansion into Gwinnett County called for three rail stops: Norcross (Jimmy Carter Boulevard at Buford Highway), one at Indian Trail Boulevard near I-85 and one near Gwinnett Place Mall. The extension would have operated on Georgia Power-owned rights-of-way of power lines. Over the past two decades residential development has consumed some of that land. Officials are now examining a shift in the route to include parts of a Norfolk/Southern spur line and public right-of-way along Brook Hollow Parkway and Satellite Boulevard.

The importance of transit-oriented development (TOD), a dire need for congestion relief, shifts in the county's demographics and a population that has more than doubled since 1990 might produce a different outcome the next time Gwinnett voters are asked to join the system.

When asked how MARTA expansion would mesh with Gwinnett County Transit's bus service, CID Executive Director Chuck Warbington said he envisions the county's bus routes would include service to any MARTA rail stations within the county's service area. Gwinnett County Transit's most popular bus line, Route 10, currently serves the Buford Highway corridor and terminates at the Doraville MARTA station.

The CID recently committed \$11,500 for a public opinion poll in an attempt to measure the change in the county's temperature on MARTA over the past 16 years. The board also approved an additional \$14,000 to expand the study to update ridership projections and include an additional MARTA rail stop on Buford Highway near the DeKalb County line.

GVCID Chairman of the Board Shiv Aggarwal has said he believes transit options are essential to positive economic development. Given the potential availability for some very large parcels of real estate ripe for mixed-use redevelopment (the GM Doraville Plant and OFS properties to name just two), the opportunity for a true public-private partnership that improves transportation, economic development and quality of life for Gwinnett County is phenomenal.

– Paul Snyder

Downtown Development Day

The fifth annual Downtown Development Day, sponsored by Central Atlanta Progress, will take place between 7:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. at the AmericasMart on Wednesday, November 28. The morning's program will be followed by lunch at many of downtown's newest restaurants. The day will begin with CAP president A.J. Robinson taking a close look at "Downtown by the numbers" with the latest in crime, housing and development statistics, as well as an update in terms of what is coming online in the way of new restaurants, buildings, hotels and tax allocation districts. There will also be a series of breakout sessions, including those taking a look at Downtown's discovery as a hot spot by the restaurant industry, a session entitled "making the case for more retail in Downtown" and one looking at significant changes coming to Downtown. A development expo and a ceremony for the Second Annual Atlanta Downtown Design Excellence Award, recognizing innovative and unique design in exterior and interior categories will conclude the morning's program.

Last year more than 450 developers, brokers and Downtown stakeholders attended to learn more about the area's future growth and development, and a similar if not larger crowd is expected this year.

Tickets will be on sale for \$40 until November 16th and then they'll be available for \$50 at the door after that. To learn more about this event, especially in regards to sponsorship and booth opportunities at the development expo, please contact Tahmida Shamsuddin at tahmida@centralatlantaprogress.org or at 404-658-1877. The link for the event is http://www.atlantadowntown.com/DoingBusiness_Development_Day_2007.asp

– Thomas Smith

Gwinnett Place CID - Steering toward the future

The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (GPCID) has formed a 16-member steering committee to assist in planning for redevelopment in the area. The panel, consisting of business and civic leaders, will work with the CID to prepare an all-inclusive plan that will influence future land use, zoning, transportation alternatives, community design as well as pedestrian and traffic circulation options.

The planning is part of the CID's commitment to complete an overlay district for its community: a tool typically developed in conjunction with a comprehensive land-use plan. It is issued through the county and provides zoning guidelines that integrate various interdependent elements of redevelopment for a better financial return on investment and greater flexibility in overall land use within a specified geographic area.

The Steering Committee members will be working to create an overlay district plan by March 2008, which will then be delivered to the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners for their consideration and potential adoption.

"Overlays make it easier to develop a unified look throughout the area," says Laura Best Moore, steering committee member and Burger King franchisee in the Gwinnett Place area. "It's very hard to cultivate a sense of place if there are no unifying principles that are consistently applied across the district."

In order to cultivate a branded aesthetic, the overlay will incorporate CID streetscape design standards applicable to all commercial property in the district when infill development or redevelopment takes place.

"Our goal is for Gwinnett Place to become the urban center for the Gwinnett community," says Joe Allen, executive director of Gwinnett Place CID. "In order for us to realize that goal there must be a process that provides flexible development guidelines and incentives to improve transportation systems and help shape an urban environment."

The effort is funded, in part, through the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Livable Centers Initiative. The ARC's \$35,000 contribution was matched by the CID to complete the overlay plan. "We are glad to know that the Atlanta Regional Commission shares our vision for enhancing Greater Gwinnett Place," says Mark Williams, chairman of the Gwinnett Place CID. "We expect the overlay district to guide our future and provide an overall unified plan governing the visible side of our revitalization efforts. We are working hand-in-hand with the private and public sectors so that a win-win scenario will emerge." ABM

- Joel Wascher

Advertisements

A rectangular advertisement placeholder with a textured background. It features a large, bold, sans-serif font for the text "Advertise here". Below this, in a smaller font, is the text "Call for rates" followed by the phone number "404.478.1081". On the left side of the box, there is a small graphic element consisting of a triangle with a grid pattern inside.

ATLANTA BUSINESS MAGAZINE

- Socializing at Work - It has been four years since Chris DeWolfe and Tom Anderson founded MySpace.com. In Internet years, this is more than a lifetime.