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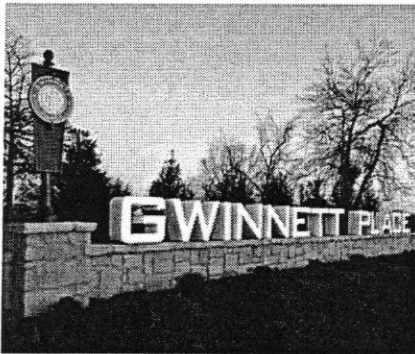


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## Researchers consider Greater Gwinnett Place part of a super-regional retail center



by James Song

Greater Gwinnett Place (GGP) has emerged as a prime location for corporate offices serving a multitude of industries. This area has attracted headquarters for such global leaders as Merial LLC and NCR Corporation, among others, because of its economic vitality, schools, location and future growth potential.

An attractive feature for GGP is its strong base of retail, shopping, dining, entertainment and other services. The strength of these companies has cemented the area as Gwinnett County's central business district. GGP is part of what researchers call a "super-regional retail center" with more than 7.7 million square feet of retail space at its core.

The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID) has made major strides since 2005 to enhance the economic vitality of Gwinnett's central business district. Due to new growth in surrounding areas, this central core has faced challenges to sustaining a vital business community.

"Ford dealers, like ours, have remained committed to right-sizing operations and focused on long-term growth," said owner and general manager Casey Coffee of Gwinnett Place Ford Lincoln and founding member of the CID. The September grand opening of the dealership's all-new sales and service facility represents a new chapter for the store and further development of Gwinnett's central business district.

A recent review of GGP and the areas immediately adjacent to it found that it is home to more than 3,400 companies representing over 50,000 jobs. As the population of metro Atlanta has become more diverse, those companies finding success in the central business district have increased.

The vision of local business owners and the leadership of the Gwinnett Place CID are collaborating to support an international gateway that is forming at GGP stronger than anywhere else in the southeast. Encouraged by these developments and as the next wave of international investors and businesses settle here, Greater

Gwinnett Place is on track to mirror successful collaborations like those in New York and Los Angeles – business communities known the world over for diversity and success.

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James Song is owner of Venture Cinema 12 in Duluth and on the board of directors for the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID).

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