

January/February 2007

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gwinnett's
**Community
Improvement
Districts**

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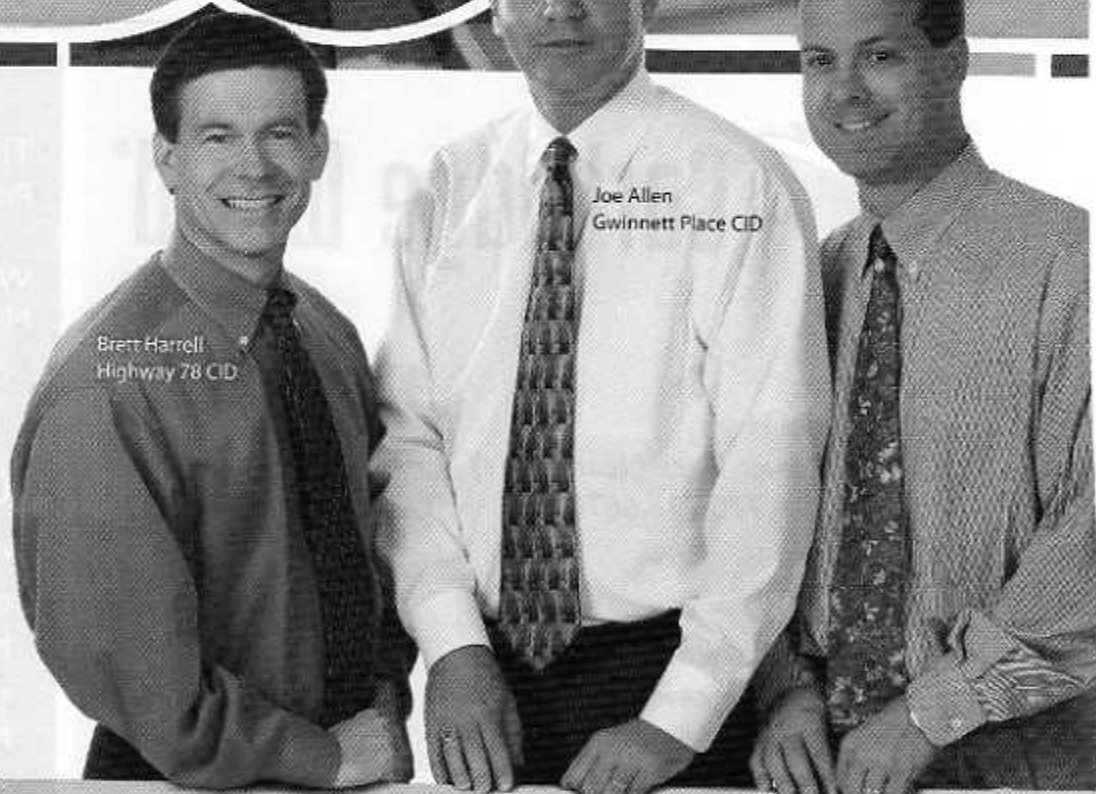
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MOVING FORWARD

Community Improvement Districts

Gwinnett is Great



Brett Harrell
Highway 78 CID

Joe Allen
Gwinnett Place CID

Chuck Warbington
Gwinnett Village CID



follow up. Following any meeting with a quick handwritten note is a very effective way to reinforce a positive prior meeting. It is also a nice touch to follow up on any information learned about someone at a meeting, such as remembering a birthday, anniversary, or special event. Along these same lines, clipping an article of interest and mailing it to someone in the "Inner Circle" is usually a well-received gesture of friendship and concern.

Finally, it is crucial to remember the importance of body language in a networking situation. Things such as good posture and eye contact are non-verbal signals other people either consciously or subconsciously notice. A handshake speaks volumes about a new acquaintance. Supermodel Cindy Crawford strongly urges women in particular to have a firm handshake and not to "give it that little lady finger wiggle." A firm handshake certainly exudes confidence.

Small business owners have enough to worry about these days without fretting over developing networking skills, right? But in view of the information above, how can a small business owner afford not to network actively? Consider the Proverb that says, "If you want to be prosperous for a year, grow grain. If you want to be prosperous for ten years, grow trees. If you want to be prosperous

for a lifetime, grow people." Remember to make it fun and take the "work" out of networking - the results will be amazing.

Lori Canterbury is a business consultant in the Columbus office of the Georgia SBDC Network.



NEW BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE

Gwinnett is fortunate to have so many organizations in which to become involved and assist you in growing your business.

GWINNETT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

If you are not a member of the chamber, then you are not growing your business to its' full potential. Join today!

6500 Sugarloaf Pkwy, Duluth
www.gwinnettchamber.org
770-232-3000

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The SBDC offers confidential one-on-one consulting at no charge to help you start or grow your business.

On the Georgia Gwinnett College Campus
1000 University Center Ln, Bldg A, Lawrenceville
www.sbdc.uga.edu
678-407-5385

GWINNETT NETWORK

Visit this website to find a listing of networking groups and business associations within Gwinnett.

For more info, visit www.gwinnettnetwork.com



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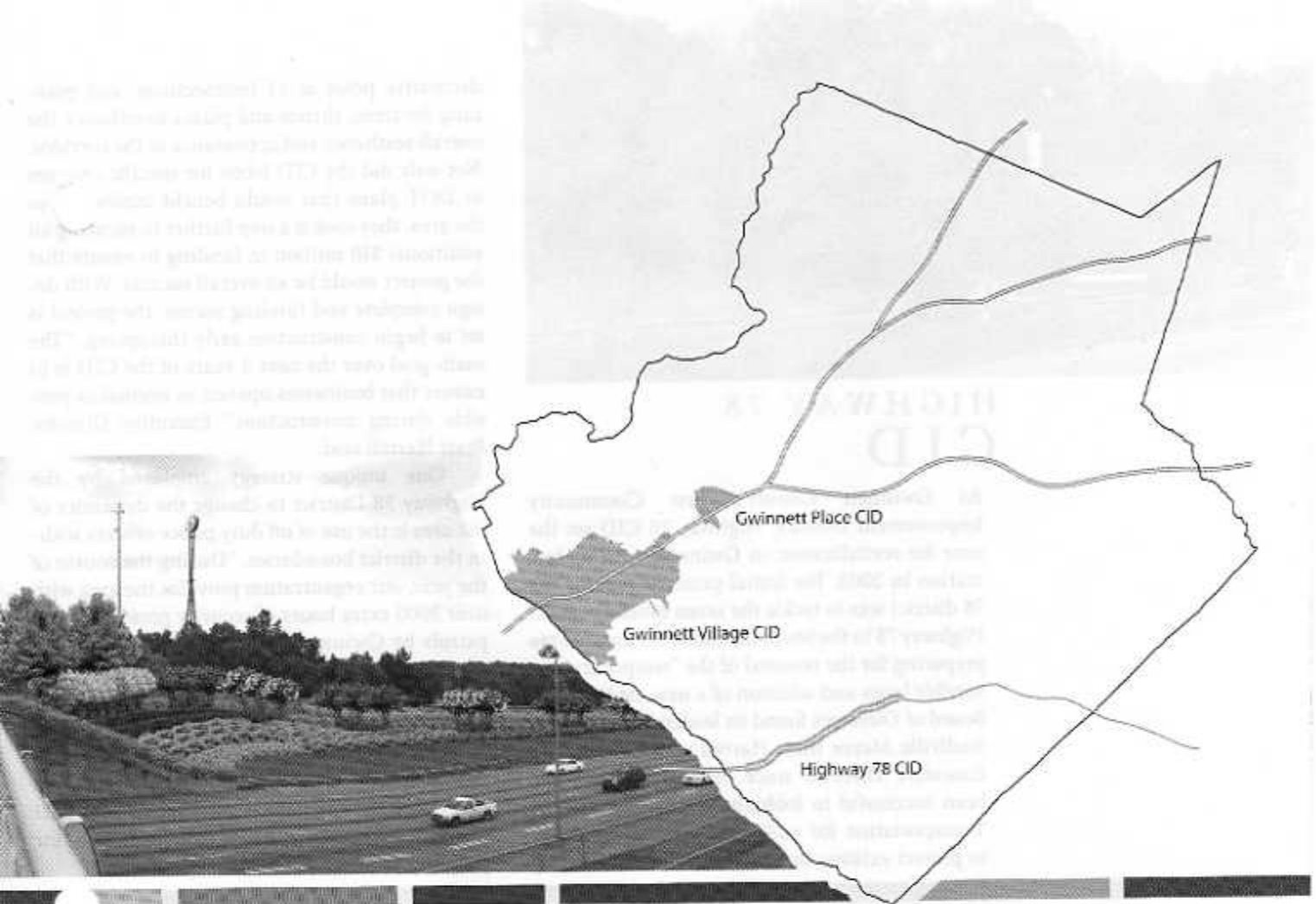
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Long heralded as one of metro-Atlanta's most desirable and fastest growing counties, many parts of Gwinnett are now facing the hard reality of being a mature community with aged and vacant buildings and dated infrastructure. Now, Gwinnett is again leading the region with innovative approaches to spearhead area redevelopment and improvement by the formation of Community Improvement Districts or CIDs for short.

Generally speaking, CIDs successfully build partnerships and fund projects with the goal of maintaining and enhancing historic growth areas.

Here is how a CID works: local commercial property owners within a specified area in need of revitalization agree to increase their own property taxes in order to raise money for improvement projects.

To become operational, CIDs must have 50 percent of property owners representing 75 percent of the value of the property in a district agreeing to the tax increase. Once approved by the appropriate governing body—in this case Gwinnett County—the CID is able to collect the additional revenue and put it to use in order to revitalize the area.

CID tax dollars become "seed money" used to

leverage federal, state, local and private grants. All the money stays within the district to make the area more inviting for those seeking a place to live, work and shop. CIDs spearhead pedestrian, transportation and security improvement projects that ensure quality redevelopment.

Georgia's first CID was formed in Cobb County's Cumberland/Galleria area in 1987. The number of CIDs has increased to 12 in metro Atlanta, with three operating in Gwinnett. **Highway 78 CID**, includes a seven-mile stretch of US Highway 78 in the Snellville/Stone Mountain area. **Gwinnett Place CID**, encompasses Gwinnett's first regional mall near Duluth. **Gwinnett Village CID**, centers around three interchanges along I-85 in Norcross: Jimmy Carter Boulevard, Indian Trail Road and Beaver Run Road.

With Gwinnett's new focus on revitalization and redevelopment through CIDs, the County is set to attract sustainable and thriving business and jobs to the southern parts of the County with the intent to continue the motto that "Success Lives and Works Here" in Gwinnett.

Here is quick snapshot of each Gwinnett County Community Improvement District:



HIGHWAY 78 CID

As Gwinnett County's first Community Improvement District, Highway 78 CID set the tone for revitalization in Gwinnett with its formation in 2003. The initial primary goal for the 78 district was to tackle the seven miles along US Highway 78 in the Snellville/Stone Mountain area preparing for the removal of the "temporary" reversible lanes and addition of a new median. The Board of Directors found its leadership in former Snellville Mayor Brett Harrell who has been its Executive Director since formation. Brett has been successful in lobbying the Department of Transportation for additional median openings to protect existing businesses in the area, adding

decorative poles at 13 intersections, and planning for trees, shrubs and plants to enhance the overall aesthetics and appearance of the corridor. Not only did the CID lobby for specific changes to DOT plans that would benefit business in the area, they took it a step further in securing an additional \$10 million in funding to ensure that the project would be an overall success. With design complete and funding secure, the project is set to begin construction early this spring. "The main goal over the next 2 years of the CID is to ensure that businesses operate as normal as possible during construction." Executive Director Brett Harrell said.

One unique strategy employed by the Highway 78 District to change the dynamics of the area is the use of off duty police officers within the district boundaries. "During the course of the year, our organization provides the area with over 2000 extra hours of security protection and patrols by Gwinnett County Police at our own expense," said Harrell.

With three years under its belt, the success of Highway 78 CID is already evident in the property values within the district. Since inception, property values for the area have increased on average over 20 percent proving that the CID was and will continue to be a wise investment for property owners and Gwinnett County.

GWINNETT PLACE CID

When Gwinnett Place opened in the early 1980s, this regional mall was the center of commerce for the Gwinnett community. However, over time, changing buying habits, additional competition, and its auto-dependent development strategy began to have an impact. Business and community leaders in the greater Gwinnett Place area stepped up to the challenge and formed Gwinnett's second CID in 2005. Now recognized as the primary advocate for the area and a challenger of the status quo, the CID has taken the lead in championing projects that will enhance the economic vitality and long-term sustainability of Gwinnett's central business district.

"Our top priority is to implement projects focused on transportation mobility, redevelopment and streetscaping. We are laying the groundwork for the successful emergence of Gwinnett Place as an exciting, mixed-use destination in the heart of Gwinnett," said Joe Allen, Gwinnett Place CID Executive Director. A recently completed transportation study of the entire district produced a plan that identifies major roadway improvements along with pedestrian



connections valued at \$65.5 million.

Although traffic and streetscape improvements have many businesses in the district excited, the buzz around Gwinnett Place CID is the potential of several redevelopments that include high-rise construction of multi-story office/retail/condos. Currently, three zonings (1 approved and 2 pending) are Gwinnett's first to fall under the new high rise regulations recently put in place by the Board of Commissioners to spur quality redevelopment. "This is what Community Improvement Districts bring to the table. CIDs stabilize an area and bring the focus back to the sustainability of the businesses. The Gwinnett Place area has prospered in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Together, the CID and business leaders are keeping Gwinnett Place *the place to be*," said Allen.