

The initial research report alone was nearly a year in the planning and development stage. The chamber board began talking with community leaders about it perhaps a year ago, says McCargo of Scientific Atlanta, a technology company that employs 1,507 people on a 300-acre campus outside Lawrenceville near Interstate 85 and Highway 316. "As businesspeople we all understand that you've got to have a strategic plan," he says. "The Market Street consultants took us through who we are and what we want to be when we grow up. We paid attention to all the things that make a community great."

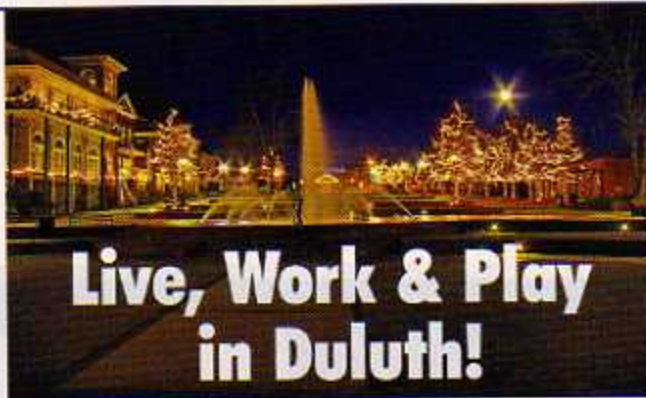
The research will offer an important recruiting tool for the county's economic development efforts, says Chip Mitchell, project manager at the chamber. "We looked at workforce development, quality of life, creating a business friendly community, regulatory environment, everything that's important to success."

EDUCATION, DIVERSITY

The partnership's mission and goals grew out of its research on Gwinnett's strengths and challenges.

One of Gwinnett's strengths is its schools. "People move here because of our good schools. We have the largest school system in Georgia, and our attainment levels have never been higher," Masino says. The school superintendent is on the partnership, which is logical because the system is one of the county's largest employers. With an enrollment of about 150,000, Gwinnett adds some 7,000 new students each year, according to figures on the system's website.

Every growing community knows that, particularly when it comes to schools, growth can be a blessing and a tension, leading to overcrowding and adjustment issues. In Gwinnett those tensions are heightened by an amazing blend of cultures and backgrounds. By all estimates, the number of different languages spoken by Gwinnett students



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*Artist rendering



To keep Gwinnett Place successful, the **Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District** has as its highest priority the construction of a single-point urban interchange to replace the existing Pleasant Hill Road Bridge over I-85.

The innovative interchange will allow continuous traffic flow to ease congestion and enhance safety, which increases the area's attractiveness and long-term economic vitality.

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