



## Gwinnett officials study turning mall into transit hub



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The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District will study how to integrate the potential bus rapid transit route in the county to the mall site.

By [Grace Donnelly](#) – Reporter, Atlanta Business Chronicle  
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A grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission will allow the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District to create the most comprehensive plans yet for the revitalization of the mall site. The idea is the latest attempt to revitalize the Duluth area mall, which flourished in the early 90s but has been in steep decline for over a decade.

A study of possibly converting it into a transit station is funded with a \$220,000 grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID) is leading the study. It's working with county commissioners and residents on concepts to redevelop the mall.

Gwinnett County recently bought the 39-acre property for \$23 million. It's one of several Atlanta suburban areas exploring bus rapid transit.

Gwinnett Place CID Executive Director Joe Allen said redeveloping the mall has been a focus for many years, but until the county owned the property options were limited. Now the ARC grant will support a "deep dive" into the strategy for advancing the project.

"The stars really did align for us," Allen said.

The funding comes from federal transportation dollars that ARC disperses through its Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program. Local governments submit proposals to secure the grants, which cover 80% of the cost for studies or transit construction. Grant recipients cover the rest.

LCI Program Director Jared Lombard said ARC had about \$1.8 million in available funding this year. Gwinnett Place Mall fits the program's goals because its revitalization can create a walkable, mixed-use district centered around a new transit hub, he said.

Gwinnett received a separate \$100,000 LCI grant to study a bus rapid transit stop at Sugarloaf Mall and a connection to the Infinite Energy Center.

ARC also considered the transportation needs of the growing Gwinnett workforce when awarding the grants. By 2050, it could see its population increase nearly 60%, outpacing the growth in Fulton County.

The LCI program has invested more than \$250 million in metro Atlanta communities since 2000 to help pay for studies and construction costs on transportation projects that improve mobility and quality of life.

The ARC board has allocated \$345 million through 2050 to fund transportation projects that result from completed LCI studies.

The other 2021 LCI grant recipients include:

- The city of Alpharetta, which received \$160,000 to study transit and redevelopment along South Main Street.
- The city of Douglasville, which received \$160,000 to update its town center strategy that addresses housing, green space and upgraded connections to the Northside area.
- The city of South Fulton, which received \$120,000 to study new transportation options and an economic development strategy for the Old National Highway corridor.
- The Lilburn Community Improvement District, which received \$120,000 to study improvements to its downtown and housing options.
- The city of Grantville in Coweta County, which received \$100,000 to study a transit connection to the Xpress commuter bus system and a revitalization of its downtown.
- The city of Hampton, which received \$80,000 to study how to avoid displacing residents near its downtown as the city looks to revitalize the area and improve transportation safety.
- The Midtown Alliance, which received \$80,000 to study pedestrian safety and existing transit stops along West Peachtree and Spring Streets.
- Atlanta's Upper Westside CID, which received \$64,000 to examine pedestrian safety and improvements to existing transit stops along Huff Road and Ellsworth Industrial Boulevard.