



Redevelopments at Gwinnett Place, North Point malls focus on walkability

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TRADEMARK PROPERTIES

A rendering of the event space that will be built as part of Trademark Properties' redevelopment of North Point Mall.

[Joe Allen](#) recalls shuffling his kids around in a minivan all over Gwinnett County, where residents have hopped in their cars for years to travel between work, home and nearly everywhere else.

"People don't want that, especially my kids now that they're grown," said Allen, executive director of the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement, while speaking at a Thursday event focused on metro Atlanta redevelopment hosted by Partnership Gwinnett and Council for Quality Growth.

That lifestyle shift is one of the forces driving redevelopment specialists to transform Gwinnett Place Mall, North Point Mall and other underperforming malls into walkable enclaves by blending residential units, shops, restaurants, offices and public spaces together.

As these massive properties undergo change, it's important for local leaders and developers to dedicate attention to the surrounding environment, not only the mall sites themselves, Allen said. That can be achieved through trails, transit and other mobility

improvements to allow residents and workers to conveniently access the site without a car.

"It cannot be an island unto itself," Allen said.



Surface parking makes up about 40% of the Gwinnett Place area.

Gwinnett Place Mall

In July, the team [spearheading efforts to redevelop Gwinnett Place Mall finalized a plan](#) to pitch to county officials. It calls for breaking the 90-acre site into seven villages with up to 3,500 apartments, restaurants, shops and offices surrounded by a central park. Macy's, Mega Mart and Beauty Master would remain on the site.

The plan includes several transportation upgrades, including establishing a street grid by breaking up the site with new roads. A greenway would be installed around Ring Road, which encircles the mall site, with connections into other trail networks. Bus rapid transit – in which buses run in mostly dedicated lanes with traffic signal prioritization — would connect Pleasant Hill Road to Satellite Boulevard.

A new transit center would serve as a hub for local bus lines. A parking garage would replace the acres of surface asphalt parking, which currently makes up about 40% of the land in the Gwinnett Place area.

Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners are set to hear a 20-year implementation strategy for the redevelopment plan on Oct. 18.

North Point Mall

[Trademark Property Co. has unveiled its vision for revamping North Point Mall.](#) It involves demolishing a portion of the existing mall structure to make room for nearly 1,000 apartments and townhomes, shops, restaurants, offices and greenspace.

The plan includes placing bike lanes and pedestrian paths on existing roads, as well as links into the Alpha Loop, an 8-mile greenway poised to encircle the suburban city. [The Alpha Loop will connect several job and entertainment hubs](#), including Avalon, downtown Alpharetta and North Point.

"If you want people to live there, they have to have these trail connections — the amenities — in order to want to live there," said [Kathi Cook](#), director of economic and community development for Alpharetta.

Transforming the mall site could serve as a catalyst for growth and further redevelopment around it, Cook said. The city now allows developers to more easily pitch residential units in the North Point area — which encompasses 900 acres mostly filled with subdivisions and office parks — to fill the need for workforce housing.

To improve walkability in the area, Alpharetta plans to reduce North Point Parkway from six lanes down to four lanes, which will make room for 12-foot-wide sidewalks on either side of the road. It's an example of trying to study and improve upon an entire area instead of a single property, Cook said.

Alpharetta City Council is expected to vote on Trademark's plan in early November.



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