

GWINNETT

Daily *gap* Post

Gwinnett County seeking up to \$50 million in federal grants for transportation projects in Gwinnett Place area



By Curt Yeomans

February 7, 2023

Gwinnett County officials will apply for two U.S. Department of Transportation RAISE grants, worth up to \$25 million each, for mobility projects in the Gwinnett Place Mall area.

County commissioners voted on Tuesday to apply for the grants, which would be collectively worth \$50 million. The RAISE grants are available under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that went into effect last year.

One grant would help cover much of the cost to expand the Gwinnett Place Transit Center. The other grant would cover a significant portion of the cost for a multi-use path that will connect the soon-to-be-redeveloped Gwinnett Place Mall property with McDaniel Farm Park.

“The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law approved \$1.5 billion for the U.S. DOT to award as RAISE grants for transportation projects that will have significant local or regional impact and improve transportation infrastructure,” said Gwinnett County Transportation Director Lewis Cooksey told commissioners.

The grants are part of ongoing efforts to revitalize the Gwinnett Place area. The county finalized its purchase of most of the area’s namesake mall in 2021 and plans are on the table for a mixed-use redevelopment that would include mixed-use redevelopment that would include a

cultural center, existing and new retail, green space and residential uses among other amenities.

The county has also been planning to overhaul and expand its transit center at the mall for years, gradually acquiring land for that project.

If Gwinnett's grant application concerning the center is approved, the U.S. Department of Transportation would provide \$25 million for the project while the county would provide a local match of \$6.25 million.

The expansion of the center is intended to accommodate an expansion of the county's transit system, Ride Gwinnett, including a new route from the center to the Lilburn area and the possible future addition of bus rapid transit between the Gast South District and the OFS property.

"The redevelopment of the Gwinnett Place Transit Center is a prime example of a project that would have significant local and regional impact," Cooksey said. "This redevelopment will accommodate the planned county-wide transit system increases, provide access for future bus rapid transit and facilitate for a transit-oriented redevelopment of the adjacent Gwinnett Place Mall."

"The redevelopment of the transit center will have energy-efficient facilities, bike and trail connections, on-site customer service, a ticketing facility, a restroom facility and drop-off areas."

As for the multi-use trail project, the U.S. DOT would provide \$25 million for it while the county would provide a \$6.25 local match and \$1.75 million in additional funding to cover the remaining cost of the project – if the grant application is approved.

County officials plan to use special purpose local option sales tax funds to cover its \$8 million portion of the funding. The project will have a \$33 million total cost because, in addition to the trail, it also includes a bridge to get walkers and runners over a busy road in the Gwinnett Place area.

The multi-use trail is expected to run from McDaniel Farm Park to Ring Road, where it will connect to the eventual redevelopment of the mall property.

"The project would include a pedestrian bridge over Satellite Boulevard for safe crossing of the major arterial," Cooksey said. "If selected for the grant, the funding will help strengthen Gwinnett's approach to provide non-vehicular facilities in the redevelopment of Gwinnett Place Mall."