



# Highway 78 Community Improvement District District Update

November 2005 ~ Vol. 4, No. 4  
Info for District Members and Friends

## MAKING 78 GREAT!

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### Our Mission:

To establish a vibrant, upscale destination area; improve business development opportunities; and enhance property values by developing and promoting coordinated transportation and community character improvements to benefit property owners, business owners, and residents along the Highway 78 corridor.

## Ten Million Dollars!

Congress allocates \$10.1 million for Highway 78



A successful effort by Georgia congressmen and the Highway 78 CID has resulted in \$10.1 million in federal funding to improve the corridor.

“As the volume of traffic along the Highway 78 corridor has increased over the past twenty years, safety and mobility on the corridor have been jeopardized. I consider the Highway 78 Corridor Improvement Project important

to our citizens, and I commend the Highway 78 CID, in conjunction with Gwinnett County and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), for taking strides to increase the mobility and safety along the corridor while maintaining and maximizing its economic growth and long-term vitality,” says U.S. Congressman **John Linder**. Linder, Sen. **Johnny Isakson**, and Rep. **David Scott** lead the charge for Highway 78 and they were joined by Sen. **Saxby Chambliss** and Rep. **Lynn Westmoreland**.



U.S. Congressman  
John Linder

“Infrastructure is our state’s single greatest need,” U.S. Sen. **Johnny Isakson** says of the Federal Highway Bill that President George W. Bush signed into law in August. “This legislation is critical to the state of Georgia, because it will provide our state with the tools necessary to improve and expand its surface transportation infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing population.”

Congressman **Linder** added, “These enhancements will not only help to provide the critical infrastructure necessary to ensure the safety and security of Georgia’s citizens, but will also support developing infrastructure needs for inter-parcel and pedestrian access to businesses, median upgrades, and lighting.”

For the CID property owners who have invested \$1.5 million in additional property taxes over the past two years, the funding represents a better than 6.75 to 1 return on their investment.

“One of our primary objectives as a CID is to leverage additional funding,” Highway 78 CID Executive Director Brett Harrell says. “Georgia’s congressional delegation came through for Highway 78 commercial property owners in a big way – and this funding will play a vital role in making our corridor a great place to live, work and shop.”

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# Corridor planning workshop creates vision for future

It was like Lego's for grown-ups.

Over the course of two sessions this fall, residents and business owners used colorful building blocks to demonstrate exactly what they would like to see happen on the stretch of Highway 78 from McGee Road to Killian Hill Road. Formally called a design "charette" – the process gave citizens the chance to weigh in on issues involving corridor strengths, open space, land use, revitalization, and transportation.

"A major component of this study is transportation, which in conjunction with land uses, was examined in a comprehensive manner during the charette exercises," says Paige Hatley, an urban planner at PBS&J, which conducted the study along with Bleakly Advisory Group and Urban Collage. "Results from the charette revealed that participants are in favor of creating a livable community by promoting development that is conducive to pedestrians."



Highway 78 business owners and residents also identified transportation improvements that would complement the planned Georgia Department of Transportation safety project, which will remove the existing reversible lane system from the highway. (Construction could start as early as next fall.) These improvements include inter-parcel access points between land uses and the construction of parallel roadways to provide alternative routes for motorists.

"These projects will be crucial for facilitating traffic flow in the corridor," Hatley says.

Charette participants also said they would like to see things such as:

- 👉 pedestrian connectivity
- 👉 tree-lined roadways
- 👉 multi-use development at major intersections
- 👉 additional park space

The consulting firms turned residents visions into a land-use map and are now developing a comprehensive master plan for the study area. The Hwy 78 CID will then attempt to solicit federal, state and local support to fund the costs of implementing the plan over the next several years.



The charette was funded by the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative program, which awards grants to municipal governments and non-profit organizations to undertake studies that examine transportation improvements and land development strategies in study areas of regional importance such as Highway 78. The Atlanta Regional Commission provided a \$94,000 grant for the Highway 78 Corridor Study, one of only three corridor studies awarded.

Learn more at [www.78cid.org/lci](http://www.78cid.org/lci)

## CID Security Team

### Major Activity Summary Nine Months 2005

Alarm Investigations	39
Area Checks	2741
Business Visits	698
Traffic Pullover	35
Burglary, Robbery, Theft	5
<b>Total Incidents</b>	<b>2873</b>
Total Citations Issued	11
<b>Total Patrols</b>	<b>175</b>

*We're making 78 great!*

# We're Safe on 78

# Making 78 clean

CID's landscaping services clear path for commerce

Newcomers to the Stone Mountain, Lilburn and Snellville areas may not realize something is different about the Highway 78 corridor: store-front greenery is perfectly maintained, and the highway is trash-free.

For local businesses, the landscaping services provided by the Highway 78 Community Improvement District (CID) the past two years are subtle touches that make a big difference.

"I definitely think the landscaping is an advantage," says Sonya Graves, owner of All That Yarn in the Fountain Square shopping center.

Loganville-based Leach Landscaping scours the corridor year-round – maintaining street-side lawns and removing unsightly garbage.



Sonya Graves, owner of All That Yarn says, "Clean streets mean customers are more likely to pay attention to the businesses. Presentation means a lot."

According to Jimmy Norton, chairman of Snellville Downtown Development Authority, the clean streets are an easy-to-overlook yet essential part of a safe, attractive, and viable business environment.

"The landscaping has been a great benefit to Snellville businesses," he says. "Well-kept roadways always create an inviting path for shoppers, and the CID's work is making Snellville an even greater destination."

Thinking of the myriad of other street improvements the CID has planned, Graves echoes Norton's sentiments.

"The work to keep the highway clean is making a great entrance to Snellville," says Graves, who decided to pursue her entrepreneurial dreams by opening her store more than a year ago. Observing there was no fabric store in the area, she seized the Snellville opportunity. "People can see that. The future of the Highway 78 area is very promising. I think it has the potential to achieve what cities like Alpharetta and Duluth have done."

## CLEAN

### KEEPING HIGHWAY 78 CLEAN

Our landscaping company scours the corridor year-round - maintaining street-side lawns and removing unsightly garbage.

Recent successes:

- Removed 84 bags of trash in July.
- Removed 105 bags of trash in August.
- Cut grass along 35 miles of roadway in September - mowing both sides of the 7-mile section of the highway within our jurisdiction each week.

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MAKING LIVE • WORK

# Lake Lucerne banners will build community ID

The throaty squawk of an unseen blue heron pierces the air above Lake Lucerne. Heavy wings flap. Tree limbs shake. The bird leaps out of the canopy and in to view, soars past the shore, glides across the lake, and disappears.

Basking in the sunlight of her Lilburn studio with pastels and pencils in hand, artist Sharon Bolin thrills at the sight of the bird she has come to know so well. Then she turns her attention back to her drawing of him.

"There's a little bit of mystery to him," Bolin says, an excited glimmer in her eyes. "A lot of times I'll go out on the lake in a pontoon boat and not even know he's there. Then he'll fly out and you'll see that huge wing span. It's almost a majestic sight – that large bird who know he is the king of his domain."

Using her right pinky finger to blend the colors of the heron's wing, Bolin puts the finishing touches on a work of art now featured on twelve banners that will line the Lake Lucerne neighborhood. For the Highway 78 CID, the banners mark the first stage of efforts to heighten the sense of identity in the corridor's various neighborhoods – illustrating that the area is worthy of spending time in – not simply a place to pass through.

For the artist, it means even more.

"I hope the banners play a role in making people more aware of the whole environment here," says Bolin, a portrait artist by trade and who offered to create the heron piece pro bono. She got involved in the project through relationships with local residents including MB Strickland and with Bolin's fiancé Kelly Bowlin, owner of Gwinnett Music. (Bolin's studio is

adjacent to his business, located on the first floor of the building that houses the Lake Lucerne Starbucks Coffee.) "This is a little oasis on the highway."

Bolin also sees the project as something that can make an impact on local children.

"When you live in a metropolis like we do in Gwinnett, kids think the only place they can see an animal is in the zoo," she says. "I want to make them realize that wildlife is in their back yard and that they can see some really cool things."



## SAFE

### KEEPING HIGHWAY 78 SAFE

We hire off-duty Gwinnett County police officers from the local Southside precinct to keep streets safe and businesses protected.

Officers:

- Patrolled the area for more than 100 hours in July, and 100 hours in August.
- Visited 208 businesses in July.
- Responded to 18 incidents of suspicious activity, vehicles and people in the month of July alone. They also responded to 7 business alarms and 4 auto accidents.



HWAY

8  
C.I.D.

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## Hwy 78 CID Quick Facts

Did you know that within the 7-mile Highway 78 CID boundary there are:

- ◆ 380 commercial property owners
- ◆ \$400 million in property value
- ◆ 750 businesses
- ◆ Over \$1 billion in annual sales
- ◆ 5,800 jobs

## Need A Speaker?

The Hwy 78 CID has several speakers available for civic groups, home owner associations, school gatherings, or church meetings. Want an update on planned road improvements, landscape enhancements, revitalization, or any of the activities of the Hwy 78 CID?

## Contact Us

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The Leach Landscape team maintains the public right-of-way along U.S. 78 each week.

## Executive Director's Report



Brett Harrell  
Executive  
Director

### Hwy 78 CID provides chance to shape the corridor's future

You've seen references in the news to the Highway 78 Community Improvement District (CID) and seen signs about our public meetings. You get a sense we're doing something important but you're just not sure what it is, or why it matters.

The short answer is that we are working to make life better for our community — and you can make a difference by getting involved.

A CID is formed when a majority of business property owners in a given area vote to voluntarily impose an additional property tax on themselves to provide funding for a host of improvement projects. The farsighted thinking by the business community means that business owners and residents will gain such items as safer roads, more attractive streets, and better developed — and redeveloped — communities.

In short, our mission is to make the corridor a great place to live, work and shop.

We start with the fundamentals — keeping the highway clean and safe. Our CID employs a landscaping service that each week cuts grass along both sides of the seven-mile section of the highway within our jurisdiction, removing approximately 25 bags of trash along the way. We also provide a security team composed of off-duty Gwinnett police officers who patrol the corridor looking to stop security threats ranging from unlocked doors to malfunctioning security gates. Enhancing the capability of the county police department, they're also available to respond to any incidents that may occur.

Much of our work, and the area in which business owners and residents can actively participate, relates to planning for the future.

Two community input studies are currently taking place, one focusing on the western end of our district at the Park Place area — which will take place this fall — and the other on the eastern end from McGee Road to Killian Hill Road. (See related story on page 2.)

All of Gwinnett's CIDs are also building partnerships with other government entities to produce considerably bigger results. In our case, the \$1.5 million business property owners have invested through their taxes has generated a return of more than \$16.5 million from federal, state and local funds. These dollars will be used on a range of projects. Most notably for Highway 78, they will provide for a host of aesthetic and safety improvements that will accompany the Georgia DOT's plans to add a median to the highway. With construction set to begin late next year, we will be working with the state to improve traffic flow and create a much more user-friendly community.

The key to making everything go, however, is you. Lend your time and perspective to the Highway 78 CID's civic planning activities and you'll be making your community great, too.

Don't hesitate to contact me with any issue of importance to you or your business and remember to . . . **Shop 78.**

## CID Calendar

**December 14, 2005**  
Board Meeting  
Snellville City Hall  
1:30 p.m. – public invited

**January 25, 2006**  
Board Meeting  
Snellville City Hall  
1:30 p.m. – public invited

**February 22, 2006**  
Board Meeting  
Snellville City Hall  
1:30 p.m. – public invited

Shop 78

## An old-town feel

Mast arms will add a classic touch to highway



The Highway 78 CID is in the process of submitting a proposal to the Georgia Department of Transportation to replace current, wire-strewn traffic signals with the classic appeal of mast arms.

“We want to take out the ugly wires that line 15 key intersections and put in old-fashioned mast arms,” says Dwight Harrison, chairman of the Highway 78 CID Board of Directors. “This will bring a classic touch to the highway and create a more attractive environment.”

The project calls for the mast arms to be installed in late 2006 or early 2007.

“Our goal is to increase your property values and improve your business”

Making 78 Great! Clean and Safe  
Local artist designs Lake Lucerne ID banners to build community  
Congress allocates \$10 Million for Hwy 78 improvements

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