



Equitable Redevelopment Plan

Reclaim Gwinnett Place Mall

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Acknowledgements

Community Partner Advisory Board

The Community Partner Advisory Board volunteered as the chief advisors in the planning process for the Equitable Redevelopment Plan of the Gwinnett Place Mall. Led by Chair Hilda Abbott, the CPAB played a significant role in engaging local communities and working with County staff and the Board of Commissioners to ensure that the plan is rooted in equity. They advised on the plan's strategies to clearly connect community needs with public and private investment.

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Corners Outreach

Diabetes “You Can Win”

Four Corners Primary Care Centers

Gwinnett Visibility Club

Latino Community Foundation

Medlink Georgia

National Youth Advocate Program

Northside Hospital

Partnership Against Domestic Violence

Pickles and Ice Cream

Sierra Club / Ready for 100, Environment

Georgia

SKA Academy / Together We Can Foundation

United Ebony Society

County Departments & Divisions

Voter Registration and Elections

Community Outreach

Community Services

Economic Development

Fire & Emergency Services

Health and Human Services

Parks & Recreation

Police

Transportation

Water Resources

Meetings-in-a-Box hosts

100 Black Men

Gwinnett Interfaith Alliance

Gwinnett Youth Commission

Habitat for Humanity

Los Vecinos

Norcross Senior Center

Trinity Outreach International

Interviewees

Boys & Girls Club of America

Brand Real Estate Services

Explore Gwinnett

Farmers Insurance

Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce

Gwinnett Coalition

Gwinnett County Public Library

Gwinnett County School Board

Gwinnett Visibility Club

Korean American Coalition – Metro Atlanta

Korean American Restaurant Association

Latin American Chamber of Commerce

Latino LinQ

Los Vecinos

National Asian Pacific American Women’s
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Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine –
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Point Honors and Associates, Realtors

Sierra Club

We Love Buford Highway

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Michael Park, Gwinnett County Planning
Commission

SUNE Translate

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Tyrone Rachal, Urban Key Capital Partners

Women Engaged

Special thanks to Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners and staff

Board of Commissioners: Chairwoman Nicole L. Hendrickson, District 1 Commissioner Kirkland Carden, District 2 Commissioner Ben Ku, District 3 Commissioner Jasper Watkins III, and District 4 Commissioner Marlene Fosque

County Staff: Glenn Stephens, Maria Woods, Roman Dakare, Shantell Wilson, Mark Farmer, Lewis Cooksey, Edgardo Aponte, Natasha Tyler, China Thomas, David Tucker, Deborah Tuff, Jeanie Donaldson, Terrell Davis, Jamie Lee, Lisa Anders, Shaunieka Taste, Nury Castro, Fabiola Canales, Sarah Park, Theresa Cox, Jenny Carter, Tina Fleming, Lindsey Jorstad, Mark Patterson, Regina Miller, Duane Tolson, and Chris Minor

Welcome



The Reclaim Gwinnett Place Mall project is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It's not often that we have the chance to revive a site that holds fond memories for so many. When the County decided to purchase large parts of the Gwinnett Place Mall in December 2020, we knew this was our moment to center community feedback and equity practices in the redevelopment process and reclaim a long-dormant space that did not match the vitality of the businesses around it. Today, the community surrounding Gwinnett Place Mall remains one of the most diverse and highly populated in the county.

As we look to redeveloping the mall, this project will set a precedent for Georgia and the country by acknowledging our diversity as a key economic advantage that bolsters our ability to be both welcoming and resilient. The County pursued this work with the goal of centering marginalized communities most at risk of displacement through large-scale redevelopments such as this one. We also support our partners at the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District as they pursue a concurrent plan to see what potential uses are most feasible for the mall site. Both Reclaim Gwinnett Place Mall and the CID's Revitalization Strategy will create a solid foundation on which we can attract new investment for housing and jobs — all while extending benefits to existing residents and businesses.

Over the past 10 months, we have talked to a wide range of Gwinnett residents to understand their most pressing needs. We dug deep to find potential actions where we can have the greatest impact on the most County residents, both in the mall's redevelopment and the larger community around it. Your Board of Commissioners understands that equitable redevelopment includes key elements such as:

- Creating spaces for diverse communities to gather
- Generating living-wage jobs for residents and beyond
- Supporting legacy residents and businesses
- Bringing the County closer to the community
- Holding County leadership accountable to equity goals

I view myself as your collaborator in chief, and it thrills me to share this Equitable Redevelopment Plan for Gwinnett Place Mall — a site that holds a promising future for our current residents and those who will join us in the years to come.

In partnership,



Nicole L. Hendrickson
Chairwoman
Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners



"The Gwinnett Place Mall lies at the heart of Gwinnett with a diverse set of entrepreneurs, customers, and neighbors that must be reflected in its redevelopment."

This opening line of the Community Partner Advisory Board's vision statement for the Equitable Redevelopment Plan captures our values as a board. We understood that centering equity challenges the traditional approach to economic development during opportunities like this, which typically increases the risk of economic or cultural displacement for less affluent households as

property values rise. As a real estate business owner and Gwinnett community member, I truly believe in this vision, and I was honored to volunteer as the Chair of the CPAB on behalf of the County. The CPAB was composed of residents, business owners, and other dedicated Gwinnett stakeholders who were tasked by the County with providing recommendations and counsel to staff around the Equitable Redevelopment Plan as part of the Reclaim Gwinnett Place Mall project.

During the fall of 2021, we made a vision statement and guiding principles for the plan, assisted in an open house event on the mall property, helped create a set of emerging themes, and hosted several small community engagement efforts such as "Meetings-in-a-Box" events.

In 2022, we welcomed Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners Chairwoman Nicole Hendrickson to open our first meeting of the year and invited a few new members. From that point forward, CPAB members helped get the word out to the diverse communities we represent so that the County could hear directly from Gwinnett residents about their needs and how the redeveloped Mall site could foster a more equitable Gwinnett County. We also provided our recommendations on how to incorporate the emerging themes from community engagement efforts into the Equitable Redevelopment Plan. Several points of interest came around small business development, arts and cultural development, public safety, workforce development, homelessness, affordable housing, making the site a hub of activity (day and night), as well as disparities in income and lived experience for different groups.

As the County moves forward with this project, I encourage my fellow Gwinnett residents to stay engaged by submitting comments, attending future County-led events, and having conversations with your friends and neighbors about what the future of the mall site should be. In addition, I encourage County leadership to build on the great work they started during this process and prioritize the diverse voices and needs of Gwinnett County during the Mall site's redevelopment process. My fellow CPAB members and I are proud of our contribution in crafting a vision that can translate into positive change with a bright, equitable, and more connected future for the Gwinnett Place Mall and our County.

With hope,

Hilda Abbott
Chair
Community Partner Advisory Board

Introduction

Why the Gwinnett Place Mall?

The Gwinnett Place Mall, opened in 1984, plays a unique role in the history of Gwinnett County. It was completed during a period of rapid growth, and represented Gwinnett's change from a quiet, modest community to one of the fastest growing areas in the country. Many Gwinnett residents hold special memories of it as a treasured community asset where they worked, shopped, or met with friends and family. In 2021, the County invested public resources for a direct hand in the mall's future as it wrestles with changing retail trends and competition from nearby shopping centers. Despite the mall's changes, the area around it became more vibrant. The Gwinnett Place area hosts a bevy of small businesses that range from car dealerships and real estate agencies to a variety of international restaurants.

The County's investment in the mall is a unique opportunity to reclaim this space through an inclusive redevelopment process that incorporates the voices of residents and businesses around it. This investment also signals that the County is not just looking to "business as usual" development, identical to countless others in the region and unreflective of the special character of the Gwinnett Place area. Located in one of the County's most diverse areas, the mall site's redevelopment should represent the next chapter of Gwinnett's story – one that embraces our diversity, invests in local businesses and residents, and exemplifies the Gwinnett Standard as a model for the rest of the region and the country.

Imagine the redeveloped mall site as an exciting new place that provides homes for Gwinnett families, jobs that pay a living wage, dynamic programming and mix of tenants that attract constant activity, and a safe space for Gwinnett residents to strengthen social ties. The future of the Gwinnett Place Mall will be one that centers equity, and supports a thriving, unique regional destination that is accessible and welcoming for all.

What is an Equitable Redevelopment Plan?

The Equitable Redevelopment Plan (ERP) is a roadmap that guides the mall's redevelopment by translating community voices and needs into specific parameters that the redevelopment should follow to benefit existing residents, businesses, workers, and visitors in the area.

The ERP will directly inform more detailed plans for the Gwinnett Place Mall site, both guiding the County's search for and selection of a developer or mix of developers for the mall redevelopment and identifying broader countywide policies to ensure future County-led development benefits surrounding communities. This plan is not a traditional site plan, highest and best use analysis, or traditional economic development agenda; it sets a vision based on a diverse set of community stakeholders by which the County will act.

The ERP is grounded in the vision and guiding principles defined by the Community Partner Advisory Board (CPAB) and five themes developed through an extensive engagement process. Through this plan, the County will set a precedent for equitable redevelopment. This plan is an intentional effort to center the voices of people most impacted and address existing disparities in the development process. It will demonstrate that the County can create equitable outcomes for affected communities while attracting new investment and financial prosperity to the County overall.

Vision Statement

The CPAB created the following Vision Statement:

The Gwinnett Place Mall lies at the heart of Gwinnett with a diverse set of entrepreneurs, customers, and neighbors that must be reflected in its redevelopment.

It will be a dynamic and innovative destination that celebrates Gwinnett's diverse communities, reflects community needs, and creates economic opportunity for the surrounding community.

Through the Equitable Redevelopment Plan and subsequent implementation actions, the County will achieve these goals and set a national precedent around equitable economic redevelopment.

Guiding Principles

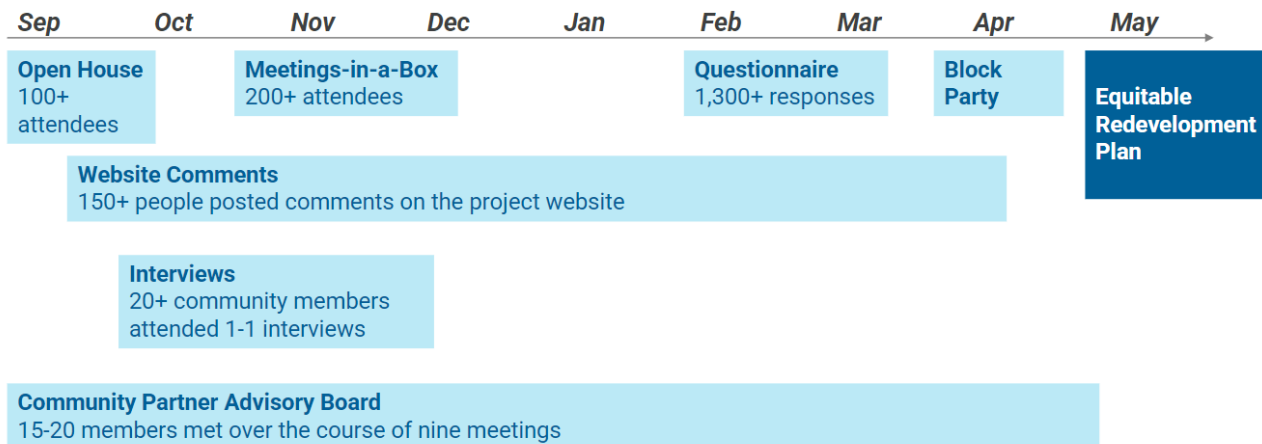
CPAB members defined the following principles to guide the redevelopment of the mall:

1. **All existing residents, businesses, and employees around the mall will lend their voices to the redevelopment process.** Our engagement process recognizes that inclusion of impacted groups and communities – especially those who have often been excluded from traditional planning processes -- is essential to the work, and we will ensure that their voices and needs are central.
2. **The mall redevelopment will contribute to a more equitable and inclusive Gwinnett County for everyone.** Gwinnett is a growing and diverse place, and we recognize the current challenges that it faces to become a more equitable and inclusive one. This redevelopment will help the County address existing and future challenges so that Gwinnett will continue to be an open and prosperous place for everyone.
3. **The mall redevelopment will be feasible and generate broad, new economic opportunities.** Our work will result in a plan that allows the County to balance an equitable vision that is responsive to community needs, opens new economic opportunities for Gwinnett residents from all walks of life, and has a feasible route to implementation.
4. **The mall redevelopment will determine ways to identify and adjust impacts on vulnerable communities.** We recognize that there are current challenges with the existing mall site, and that redevelopment may create new, unforeseen impacts. The County will identify ways to monitor these changes and create strategies to protect vulnerable communities and support them in adapting to future impacts.

Who informed this Plan?

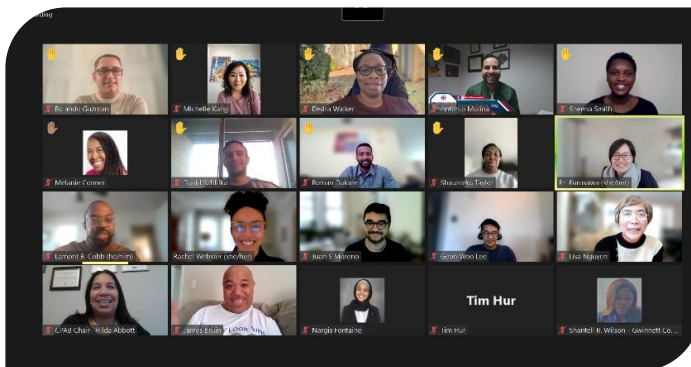
A community-driven planning process

To date, nearly 2,000 community members shared their ideas and vision for the future of the mall over the course of ten months through multiple engagement activities.



Community Partner Advisory Board (CPAB)

The CPAB, a diverse group of residents, businessowners, and community leaders, guided every step of the redevelopment process. Members met over nine meetings, both in-person and virtually to inform engagement direction, highlight priorities for their communities, and review Plan recommendations. Members also participated in a series of outreach events organized by the County and hosted small-group conversations with their community and local networks.



Open House

Over 100 residents, businessowners, and community leaders participated in the Community Open House on September 10, 2021, hosted on the Gwinnett Place Mall parking lot. The event had five interactive stations facilitated by County staff and CPAB members that covered specific topics related to equity and what it means for the future of the mall.



Meetings-in-a-Box

CPAB members and community leaders convened small-group conversations to hear from community members potentially impacted by the redevelopment.



Source: Gwinnett County, Lisa Nguyen



One-on-One Interviews

Over the course of the engagement process, community organizations, businessowners, local leaders, and other stakeholders participated in one-on-one interviews to bring diverse perspectives to the table and share their thoughts and ideas for the future of the mall.

Reclaim Questionnaire

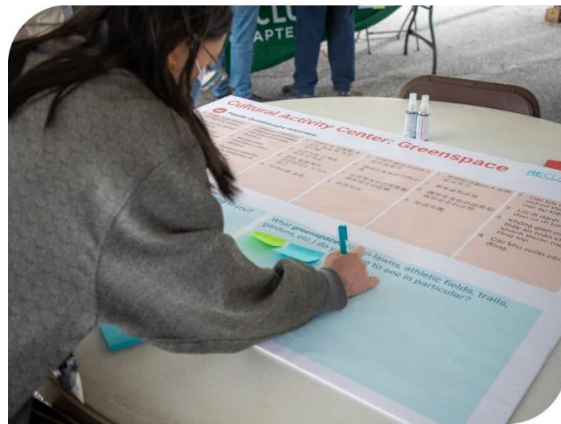
1,300 community members, half of whom live within 15 minutes of the Gwinnett Place Mall, responded to the questionnaire to share their needs and ideas for the mall. The Reclaim Questionnaire was distributed in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Cantonese, via extensive canvassing and phone banking led by Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the Latin American Association, and Trinity Outreach International. The findings elevated commonalities and differences across diverse groups around the mall.



Source: Asian Americans Advancing Justice

Block Party

On Saturday, April 9, 2022, the County hosted the Reclaim Gwinnett Place Mall Block Party at the Mall. CPAB members Hilda Abbott, Rolando Guzman, Michelle Kang, Leng Kar Chang, and Trinity Skeete facilitated conversations with community members about the plan. Ten County Departments and 17 community partner organizations, including Leng Kar's Together We Can Foundation, Trinity Outreach International, the Latin American Association, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice, tabled at the Block Party and greeted over 200 attendees.



Emerging Themes

Five Themes for Equitable Redevelopment

When asked about their vision for the mall, community residents identified their needs and desires to inform the mall's future. This section offers context on how those needs were identified by the residents and businesses of Gwinnett.



Housing

Ensure existing Gwinnett Place area residents can remain in the neighborhood and share in the benefits of redevelopment.



Neighborhood Services

Support existing and new Gwinnett residents as the County grows and becomes increasingly diverse.



Small Business

Offer existing businesses in the Gwinnett Place area new opportunities to grow and thrive.



Jobs

Generate jobs for Gwinnett residents that enable them to support themselves and their families.



Cultural Activity Center

Become a vibrant, regional destination, with high transit accessibility, that generates prosperity for communities and the County.

Housing

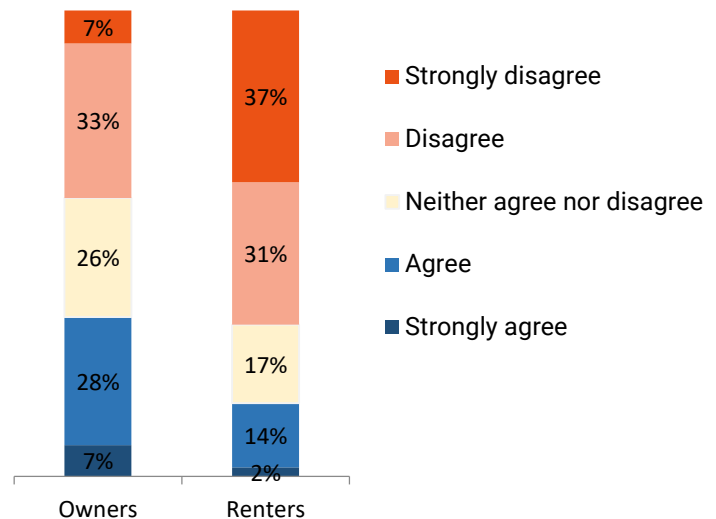
Compared to nearby neighborhoods surrounding Sugarloaf Mills and the Mall of Georgia, the Gwinnett Place area hosts housing units with relatively low rents and includes significantly more multifamily units.¹ However, existing Gwinnett Place residents are faced with high housing cost burden and risk of indirect displacement. Almost 70% of renters living within 15 minutes of the Gwinnett Place Mall feel that their neighborhood is not affordable, as shown in the data from the Reclaim Questionnaire. Additionally, residents surrounding the mall have some of the lowest percentages of home ownership as indicated in the Gwinnett County Comprehensive Housing Study. As population growth continues and demand for housing increases, the mall area and the county overall need creative strategies to ensure housing affordability for residents of all income levels.

High Cost of Housing

- Residents near the mall are feeling the pressures of housing costs. In the Reclaim Questionnaire, almost 70 percent of renters felt their neighborhood is not affordable.

Source: Reclaim Questionnaire. Data include responses from 561 people living within 15 minutes of the mall.

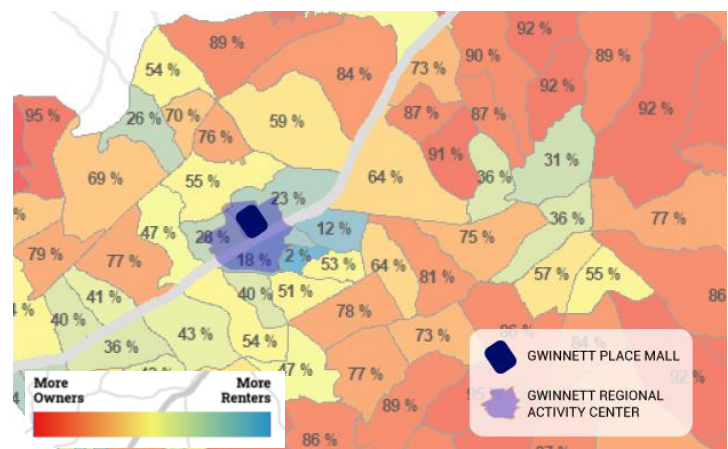
"In my neighborhood, housing is affordable."



High Risk of Indirect Displacement

- Residents around the mall are less likely to be homeowners compared to the rest of the County, with higher risk of displacement caused by increased rents.

Map illustrates Percentage of Households per Census Tract that are Homeowners. Source: Gwinnett County Comprehensive Housing Study (2022)



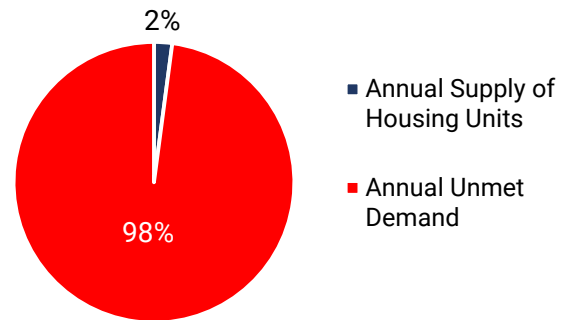
¹ Bleakly Advisory Group (2020). Gwinnett Place CID Economic Development Analysis and Strategy.

Lack of Affordable Housing Supply

- Countywide, there is not enough housing construction to keep up with demand. Gwinnett's existing housing market only meets 2 percent of demand from households earning under \$50K.²
- For Gwinnett's middle and upper-income households, the gap between supply and demand is smaller but still significant, with the market meeting 43 percent of demand from households earning \$50-100K and 23 percent of demand from households earning over \$100K annually.

Source: *Housing Gap Analysis included in Gwinnett County Comprehensive Housing Study (2022)*

Housing Demand and Supply among Households Earning under \$50K Annually



Need to Support for Residents Experiencing Homelessness

- Gwinnett has one of the largest homeless populations in Georgia, which may be exacerbated by the lack of affordable housing supply.
- HomeFirst Gwinnett estimates about 10,000 people experiencing homelessness, among which 50 percent are children.

Source: [Gwinnett Daily Post](#) and HomeFirst Gwinnett (2019)

“When it is time for homeless families to move out of shelters and other assistance facilities, they **cannot afford the rent or other living expenses** that can easily become a burden.”

Community Partner Advisory Board

² The median household income for residents living within 2 miles of the Mall is \$53K. Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2019). American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

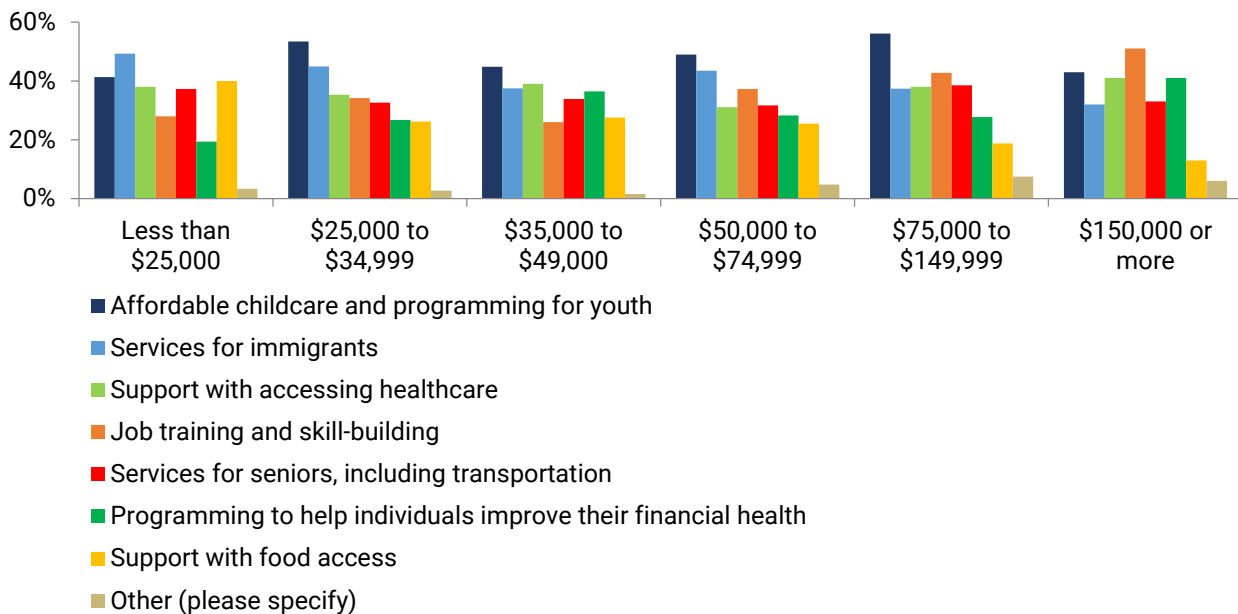
Neighborhood Services

Currently, barriers in access to basic services — healthcare, food, childcare, and many others — limit some Gwinnett residents' ability to thrive.

Need for services catering to all income groups

- Through events, CPAB meetings, and interviews, Gwinnett residents expressed a strong need for spaces in the future redeveloped mall site that provide essential neighborhood services.
- Of the services asked about in the Reclaim Questionnaire, **affordable childcare and programming for youth** were among the top options across all groups, selected by more than 40 percent of survey respondents in every income group.
- **Services for immigrants** was the most popular option among respondents earning less than \$25,000 annually, with one in two respondents voting for this option.
- **Support with accessing healthcare** and **services for seniors** was popular across all income groups, selected by more than 30 percent of respondents in each group.
- **Job training and skill-building** were within the top two options among respondents earning over \$75,000, selected by more than 40 percent of respondents in each category.
- **Programming to help individuals improve their financial health** was especially popular among those earning \$150,000 or more, selected by more than 40 percent from this group.
- **Support with food access** was popular among respondents earning under \$25,000, receiving support from 40 percent of respondents in this group.

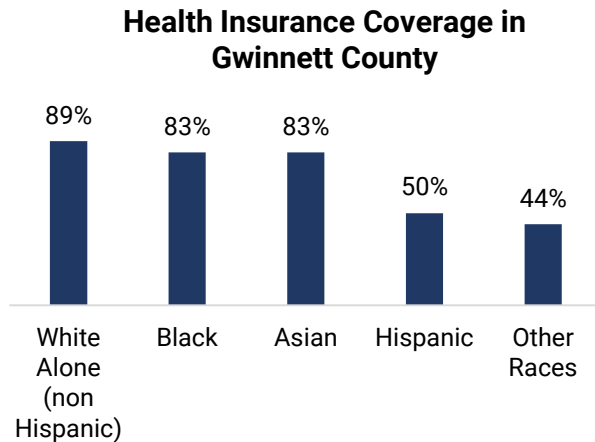
Which of these services is most important for the County to include in the redeveloped mall? (Please select the top three.)



Source: Reclaim Questionnaire. Data include 1,121 entries from respondents who answered this question and indicated their household income.

Need for Equitable Access to Healthcare Services

- Gwinnett residents experience disparities in accessing health services. Hispanic residents have particularly low health insurance coverage compared to other demographic groups in Gwinnett County.



Source: Gwinnett County Community Health Needs Assessment

"There are many doctors in the area and in Gwinnett County, it would be great to see some form of collaboration from them to provide an **all-inclusive health wellness check.**"

Meeting-In-a-Box participant

Need for Immigrant Support

- New Gwinnett residents expressed the need for services offered in their native languages, such as support obtaining personal IDs, navigating immigration processes, accessing housing, and English language classes, among others.

"**Many immigrants and refugees live in the area.** Organizations supporting these residents should also have space to provide information about their services."

Meeting-In-a-Box participant

Need for Affordable Childcare and Programming for Youth

- Community members expressed a need for better access to affordable childcare services and programming for youth.

"Dedicate part of this building to **community center for children** to be able to go."
Open House participant

"A **centrally-located place** where various needs could be addressed in one stop including food insecurity, assistance for housing, medical needs, childcare on a route that is easily accessible to public transportation. "

Meetings-in-a-Box participant

Need for Services to Support Seniors

- Engagement event participants and interviewees from immigrant communities both expressed the need for senior services so that immigrant families can stay in Gwinnett for generations to come.

"We need **services for elders** that are culturally appropriate. Families are here to stay."

Interviewee

Need for Job Training/Skills Building Opportunities

- Through the Reclaim Questionnaire, Gwinnett residents reported the lack of quality jobs and skills gap as the top barriers to finding good-paying jobs around the mall.

"Jobs around the mall are meant for high school and college aged kids. **Most adults either commute or work remotely** to find a good paying job."

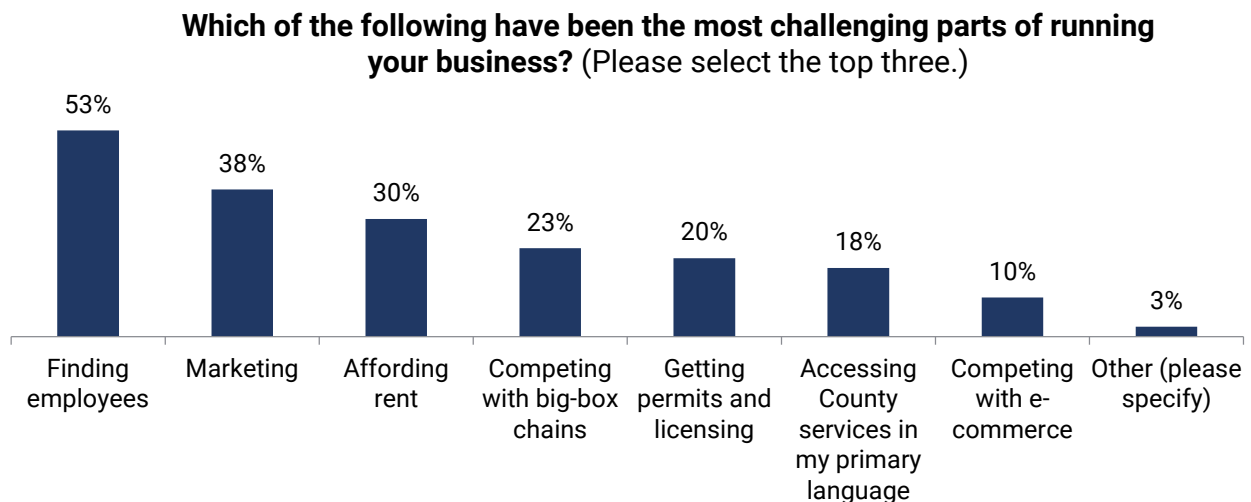
Reclaim Questionnaire respondent

Small Business

Small businesses are an important part of Gwinnett's economy. Of the more than 39,000 businesses in the County as of 2019, close to 90 percent were small businesses with less than 100 employees.³ Many of them were greatly impacted by COVID-19.

Existing challenges for small business owners near the mall

- For small business owners near the mall, **finding employees, marketing their businesses, and affording rents** were the top challenges in running their businesses.



Source: Reclaim Questionnaire. Data include responses from 40 business owners near the mall.

Challenges felt by immigrant entrepreneurs

- Community members shared the experiences of immigrant entrepreneurs, who, due to their immigration status, familiarity with doing business in Gwinnett, and language barriers, face additional hurdles. These include accessing capital to support their businesses, getting appropriate permits and licenses, and receiving technical support and mentorship in growing their businesses, among others.

"The redevelopment will **preserve the small international businesses and the rich immigrant culture** this area is known for. We don't want the small hole-in-the wall place to be priced out of the market. "

Reclaim website commentator

Challenges Caused by COVID-19

- COVID-19 put significant strains on Gwinnett businesses and workers. As of January 2021, the number of small businesses in Gwinnett County decreased by 31.6 percent compared to January 2020.⁴

³ Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce

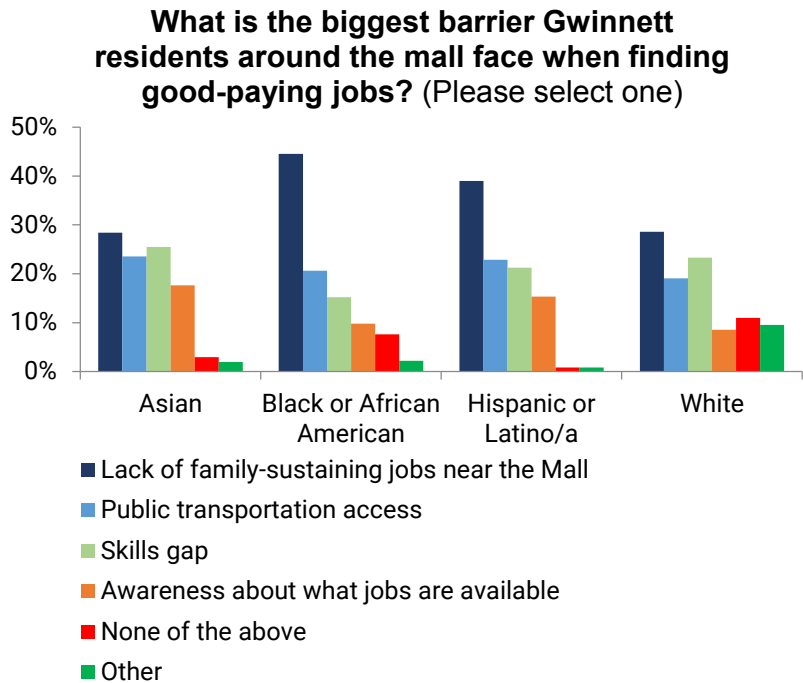
⁴ Opportunity Insights

Jobs

Over 90 percent of residents near the Mall commute to work elsewhere and are not employed in the jobs offered where they live.⁵ Community members see the Mall redevelopment as an opportunity to connect Gwinnett residents with good-paying jobs.

Lack of Good-Paying Jobs

- The lack of jobs that pay enough for Gwinnett residents to support families was selected as the primary challenge from Reclaim Questionnaire participants across race and ethnicity, especially for Black and Hispanic respondents. Skills gap and lack of public transportation access were additional challenges for many.



Source: Reclaim Questionnaire. Data include 1,001 entries from respondents who answered this question and indicated their racial/ethnic identity.

Need for Job Training and Workforce Development Programs

- Workforce development programs can be an important step to combat wage disparities, especially for youth and recent immigrants who currently cannot access paid skills training.
- Members of the Community Partner Advisory Board expressed the need to offer programming for youth that would double as skills building.

"Jobs are becoming super hard to get and especially in our generation [youth]. You need experience to apply for a job you gain experience at, and it **becomes a cycle where people who need jobs are not getting them.**"
Meetings-in-a-Box Participant

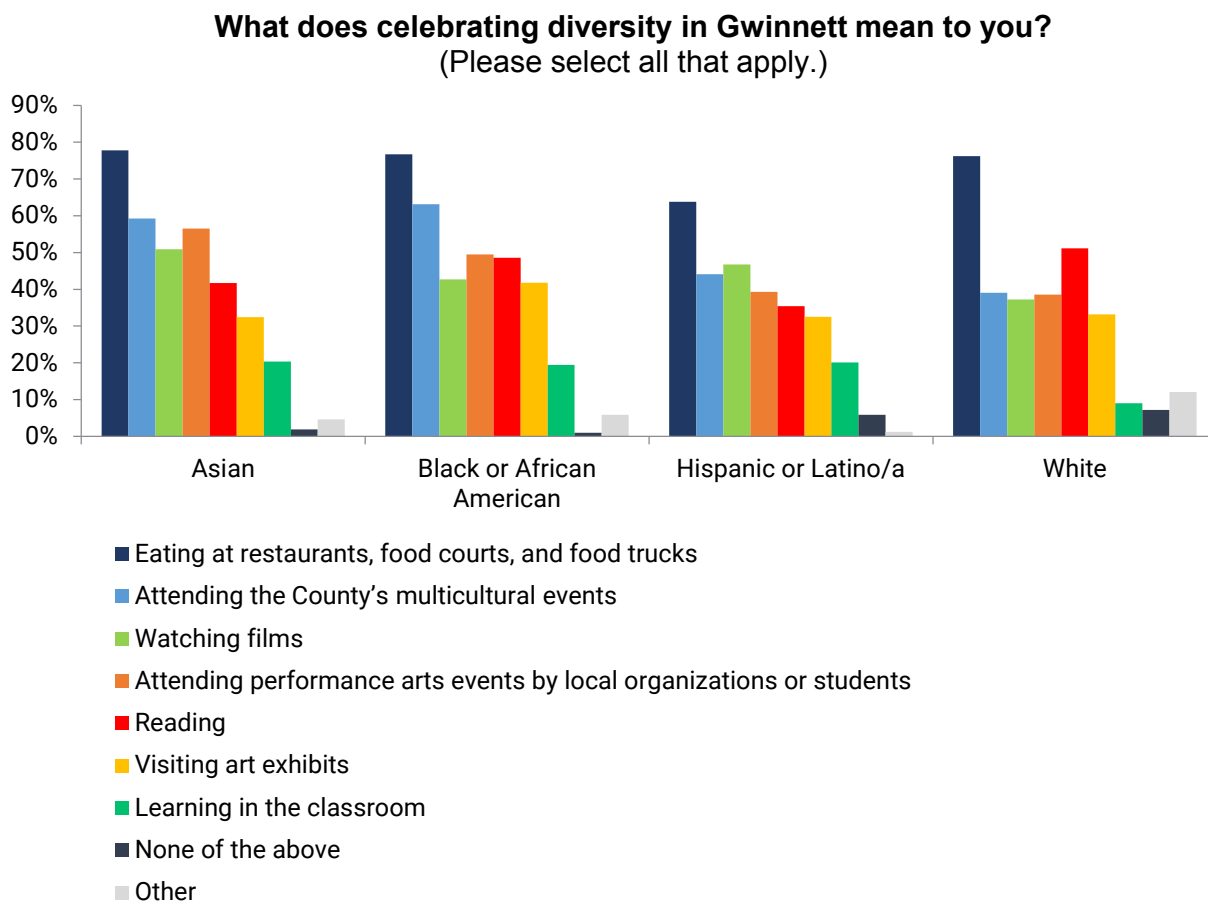
⁵ LEHD OnTheMap, 2018.

Cultural Activity Center

Community members voiced a desire for a central and accessible location in the County to gather, play, and experience the diverse cultures of Gwinnett residents.

Need for Spaces to Celebrate Gwinnett's Diversity

- Among Reclaim Questionnaire respondents, **eating at restaurants, food courts, and food trucks** was the most popular way of celebrating Gwinnett's diversity, and was selected as the top option across all racial and ethnic groups.
- **Attending the County's Multicultural Festival** and other **performance art events** were supported by a majority of Asian and Black respondents.
- **Watching films** was selected by more than a third of respondents across racial and ethnic groups and was especially popular among Asian respondents.
- **Reading** was the second most popular option among white respondents, selected by one in two respondents in this group.



Source: Reclaim Questionnaire. Data includes 1048 entries from respondents who answered this question and indicated their race/ethnicity.

- Gwinnett residents have voiced large support for an affordable performance venue.

“Definitely having an **arts and cultural space** that will bring a vibrant and rich feeling to the area would be amazing. It will allow local talent to showcase their talent and create a space for the youth as well.”

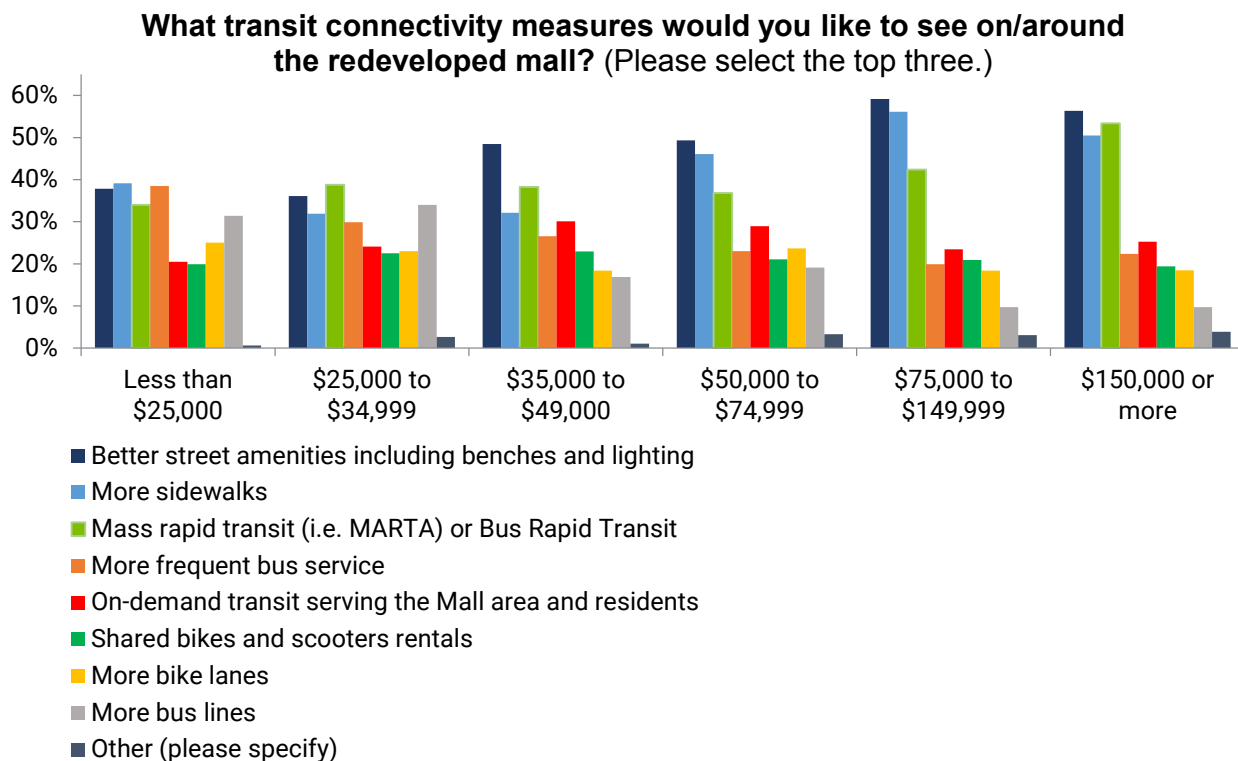
Meetings in a Box participant



Pictured: Gwinnett’s 2022 Multicultural Festival at the Gwinnett Place Mall. Source: [Gwinnett Daily Post](#) (2022).

Need for Transit Improvements and Higher Transit Accessibility

- Reclaim Questionnaire participants across all income levels selected **better street amenities, more sidewalks, and transit options** as top priorities. These options were selected by more than 30 percent of respondents in every income category.
- More frequent bus service** and **increased bus lines** were selected by more than 30 percent of respondents earning under \$35,000.
- On-demand transit services, shared bike and scooter rentals, and more bike lanes** were selected by more than 20 percent of respondents in almost every income category.



Source: Reclaim Questionnaire. Data include 994 entries from respondents who answered this question and indicated their household income.

- Efforts are underway to improve pedestrian and bike connectivity near the mall. The mall redevelopment will be closely coordinated with Planning, Transportation, and other relevant County departments to align the departments' ongoing planning efforts with the future site design.
Image Source: Satellite Blvd to Jimmy Carter Blvd BRT Study

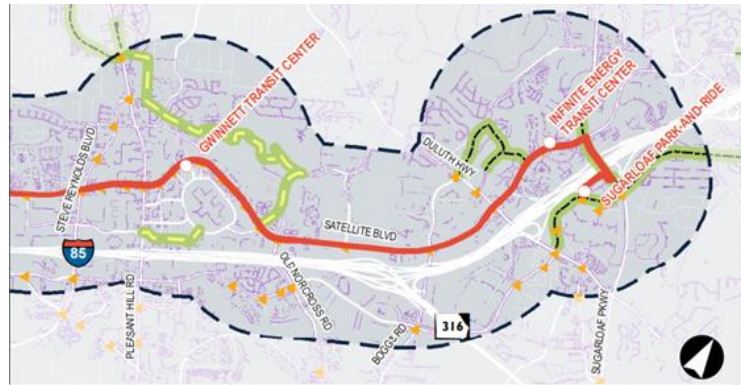
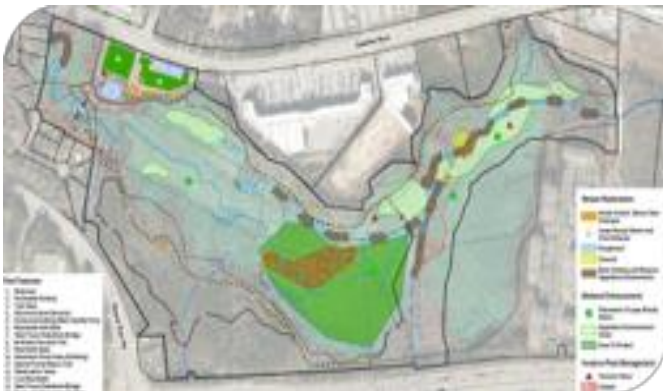


Figure 44. Bike/Ped Facilities

Study Area	Sidewalks	Existing and Funded trails	Crosswalks
Connect Gwinnett Station Area	Sidewalks	Existing Trail	Crosswalks
Corridor Alignment		Funded Trail	
Proposed Heavy Rail Extension		Partially Funded Trail	

Greenspace

- Large, open lawns for events, trailways for biking and walking, and spaces that feel safe for all identities** were the top three options among Reclaim Questionnaire respondents in every age group.
- Community gardens** was the fourth most popular option among every age group, followed by **clear signage for easy access**.

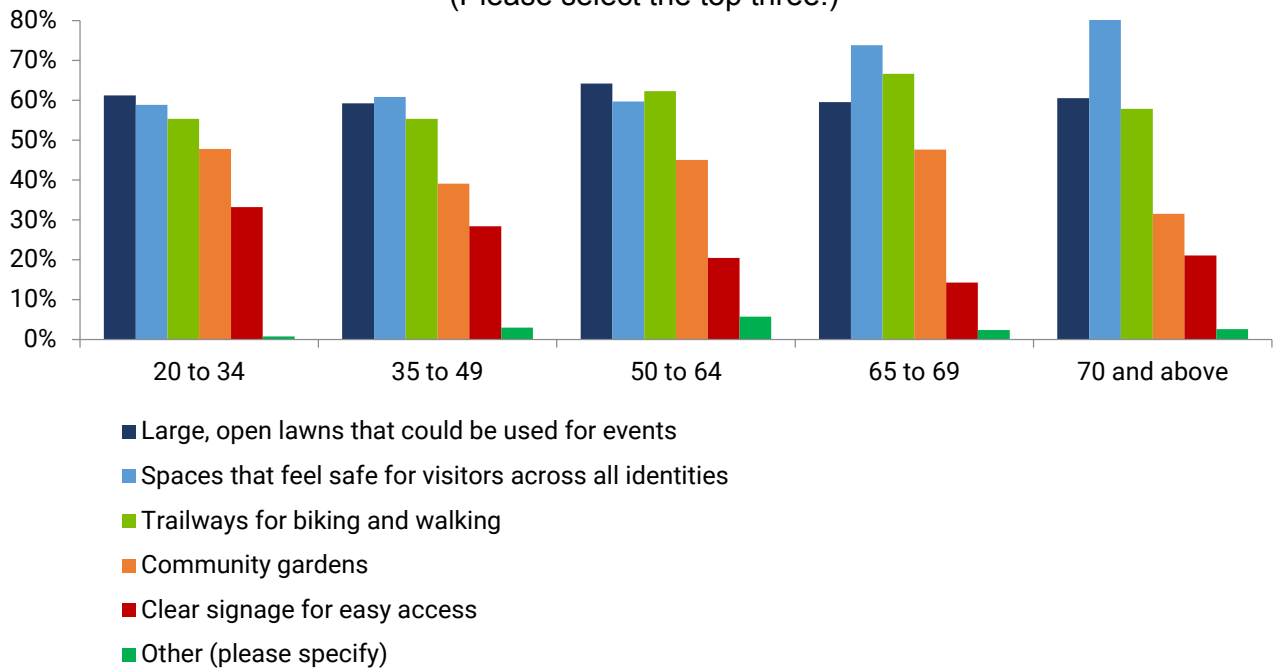


"Create **condo spaces, landscaping, grocery stores, restaurants, parking deck**, get rid of all the concrete and **add walking trails**."

Reclaim website commentator

Pictured: Proposed 68-acre Beaver Ruin Wetlands Park near Gwinnett Place Mall.
Source: [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (2021)

What types of greenspace/design considerations would you like to see on the redeveloped mall?
(Please select the top three.)



Source: Reclaim Questionnaire. Data include 1,121 entries from respondents who answered this question and indicated their age.

A Public Mandate to Reclaim Gwinnett Place Mall

Overview

This Equitable Redevelopment Plan (ERP) will be the foundation for the future of the mall site and the community around it. The ERP recommendations will inform:

- **The Request for Information (RFI) for the Mall site**, the County's process for selecting developers through defining requirements that potential developers must meet.
- **Future site design process**, including creating the site plan, determining what uses will be encouraged, and crafting a tenant mix that reflects the strategies in the ERP.
- **County regulations that apply beyond the Mall site**, ensuring zoning amendments and updates to the [Unified Development Ordinance](#) adopted in the future reflect the strategies included in the ERP.

The strategies included in the ERP are pertinent to:

- **The redevelopment of the County-owned portion of the mall**, primarily through stipulations in the RFI and in subsequent County actions in the redevelopment process, including development agreements or transactions.
- **The Gwinnett Place Mall area of influence ("Project Area")**, the area surrounding the Mall where impacts of the mall redevelopment will be acutely felt. The Project Area is defined as the area included in the existing Regional Activity Center boundary developed as part of the [2040 Unified Plan](#).
- **Countywide policies and programs**, such as amending County ordinances and creating new programs that address equity issues.

Request for Information (RFI)

A request for information (RFI) is a market research tool used by governments to obtain price, delivery, capabilities, and interest from bidders for planning purposes

For real estate projects, governments may shortlist developers through the RFI, then invite selected developers to provide more detailed plans in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP).

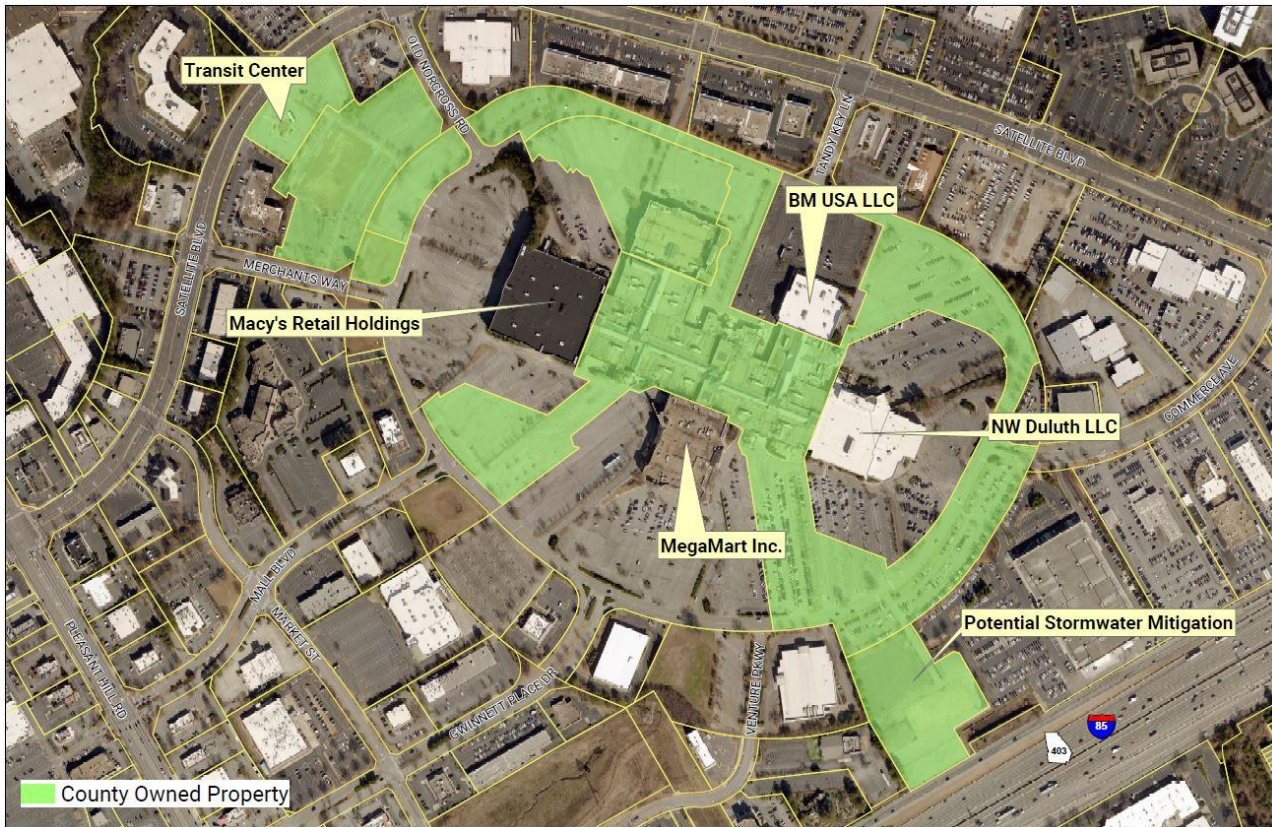
Source: U.S. General Services Administration

To implement the public mandate and the Board of Commissioners' vision to Reclaim Gwinnett Place Mall, the County will work within the following 10 strategies (as outlined in detail below) for the mall site, an additional strategy for the Project Area, and 5 additional strategies that are county wide in scope:

Strategies for the Gwinnett Place Mall Site	
Housing	1. Build affordable housing on the redeveloped mall site.
Neighborhood Services	2. Provide neighborhood services on the redeveloped mall site.
Small Businesses	3. Encourage the incubation and growth of small business in the redeveloped mall site.
	4. Create a resource hub in the redeveloped mall site.
Jobs	5. Incentivize developers to hire locally and prioritize contracting with local Gwinnett small businesses and residents of color.
	6. Attract employers who will provide living wages.
	7. Provide workforce development programs in the redeveloped mall site.
Cultural Activity Center	8. Create spaces for celebrating Gwinnett's diversity.
	9. Create well-designed greenspace.
	10. Invest in transit connectivity within and around the redeveloped mall site.
Strategies for the Gwinnett Place Mall Area of Influence ("Project Area")	
Small Businesses	1. Launch a small business loan program in partnership with and administered by a Community Development Financial Institution.
Countywide Strategies	
Housing	1. Create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to prevent indirect displacement of residents.
	2. Develop zoning tools to incentivize affordable housing production.
	3. Develop programming and legislation that support Gwinnett residents to build wealth through homeownership.
Small Businesses	4. Complete the upcoming Disparity Study and update ordinances as appropriate.
Cultural Activity Center	5. Invest in transit connectivity to the redeveloped mall site.

Strategies for the Gwinnett Place Mall Site

The County can directly realize the vision for equitable development and address community need through the planning, developer selection, construction, and operation of the redeveloped mall site. The following section identifies strategies, across all five Emerging Themes, that directly apply to the mall site.



Source: [Gwinnett County](#)

1. HOUSING: Build affordable housing on the redeveloped mall site to ensure residents near the mall can remain in the area and help address the lack of affordable housing in the area.

- In the RFI, state the County's desired outcomes for affordable housing production that supports a range of income levels and require these to be incorporated in the RFI response. Developers who propose creative ways to provide units with a range of affordability levels may receive additional points in that category.
- Encourage developers to explore existing financial and regulatory incentives for affordable housing construction. This could include federal and state incentives including tax credits, as well as local incentives such as density bonuses and fast-track permitting.

Affordable Housing

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines an "affordable dwelling" as one that a household can obtain for 30 percent or less of its income. In practice, different jurisdictions set housing affordability levels on a certain percentage of the Area Median Income (AMI), an income figure set annually by HUD. For example, the 2022 AMI for the Atlanta Metro area, which includes Gwinnett County, was \$96,400 for a four-person household, a 12% increase from 2021.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

2. NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES: Provide neighborhood services on the redeveloped mall site.

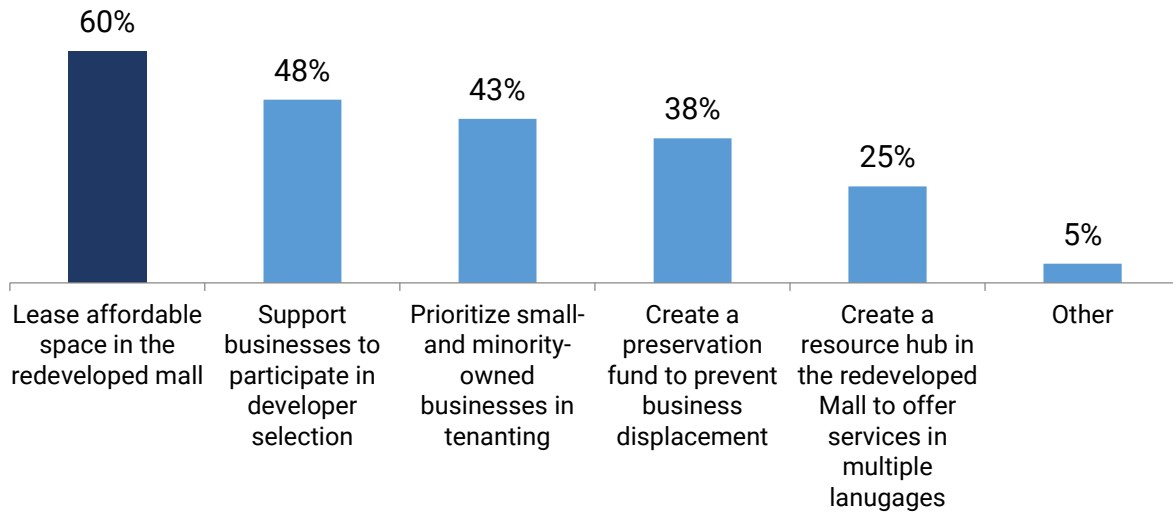
Developers who propose creative ways to preserve space for neighborhood services may receive additional points in that category. Neighborhood services will include:

- **Affordable childcare services** to reduce the financial burden for Gwinnett residents, especially low-income families with children.
- **Services to support residents around the mall who are new to Gwinnett**, such as support with obtaining ID, learning English (ESL programs), and finding housing, among others.
- **Affordable healthcare** to ensure that Gwinnett residents— especially low-income residents or residents who are new to Gwinnett – have access to healthcare, including mental health services and vaccinations.
- **Support for Gwinnett residents experiencing homelessness** to ensure the homeless population in Gwinnett has access to consistent and reliable services year-round.
- **Other neighborhood services** including senior services, youth activities, and access to healthy food.

3. SMALL BUSINESSES: Encourage the incubation and growth of small business in the redeveloped mall site. This would create opportunities for existing diverse small businesses facing affordability challenges to have a space at the redeveloped mall and benefit from increased foot traffic.

- In the RFI, invite developers to propose creative tenancing strategies that enable businesses with low profit margins to operate on the mall site.
- In the RFI, give preference to developers who propose ways to authentically reflect the existing diversity around the mall in their tenants.

What can the County do to support existing small and minority-owned businesses near the mall? (Please select the top three.)



Source: Reclaim Questionnaire. Data include 40 entries from businessowners operating near the mall.

4. SMALL BUSINESSES: Create a resource hub in the redeveloped mall site that offers affordable office space for entrepreneurs and serves Gwinnett-based businesses in multiple languages. The resource hub would connect new entrepreneurs to resources for long-term success and remove barriers for existing immigrant-owned businesses.

- In the RFI, encourage space to be set aside for an incubator space for entrepreneurs seeking small office spaces. This could be operated by the County or in partnership with private entities.
- Building on the recently launched Gwinnett Entrepreneur Center in Lawrenceville, provide technical assistance to Gwinnett-based businesses seeking support more broadly. These will include business coaching, marketing strategy, licensing and permitting, and connecting entrepreneurs to financial institutions for access to capital.
- The County will select existing community-based organizations to locate in the resource hub to offer small business services in multiple languages.

5. JOBS: Incentivize developers to hire locally and prioritize contracting with Gwinnett small businesses and residents of color.

- In the RFI, encourage developers to provide a plan that describes how they will recruit construction workers through a local workforce development entity as a first-source, or make best efforts to hire locally.
- In the RFI, development teams with (1) Georgia small business enterprise classification and/or (2) active Minority Business Enterprise certification from the Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council may receive additional points in that category.

Minority-Owned Small Business

A minority-owned business is a proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or joint-venture that is 51 percent owned, operated, and controlled by members of the following racial groups: African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American.

First-Source Hiring

Policies that specify a procedure employers must use to maximize local hiring – namely, giving a city-based or neighborhood-based job referral center the first opportunity to refer qualified candidates for available positions.

Source: University of Georgia, Small Business Development Center; City of Savannah

6. JOBS: Attract employers who pay living wages to increase the number of Gwinnett residents able to support their families. Living wages reflect the amount of income necessary for workers to support themselves and their household based on local prices for food, housing, medical care, transportation, and other essentials.

- In the RFI, prioritize developers and future tenants who commit to providing living wages for their employees.
- Countywide, review the Economic Development Ordinance for opportunities to incentivize future developers and employers receiving public funding to provide living wages.

Living Wage

A local wage rate based upon geographically specific expenditure data related to a family's likely minimum food, childcare, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other necessities (e.g., clothing, personal care items, etc.) costs.

Source: Massachusetts Institute of Technology

7. JOBS: Provide workforce development programs in the redeveloped mall site to equip Gwinnett residents with necessary skills to join growing industries in the County, and to ensure employers have access to qualified job applicants.

- In the RFI, encourage space to be leased at affordable rates for organizations/academic institutions offering workforce development programs, including paid training or internships.

8. CULTURAL ACTIVITY CENTER: Create spaces for celebrating Gwinnett’s diversity through food, arts, exhibitions, performances, murals, and other programming.

- In the RFI, encourage developers to incorporate spaces that authentically celebrate the diverse community surrounding the Mall into the design, and evaluate responses based on their ability to design spaces that feel welcoming to people of all backgrounds and identities.
- The County will collaborate with a non-profit partner or a community organization so that the programming of the space reflects the diversity of the neighborhood.

9. CULTURAL ACTIVITY CENTER: Create well-designed green space to ensure Gwinnett residents have access to a large, open green space that can accommodate recreational activities and events.

- In the RFI, encourage developers to design, build, and commit to management of green space.
- In the RFI, encourage developers to propose trails connecting to McDaniel Farm Park and/or the Loop Trail.

10. CULTURAL ACTIVITY CENTER: Invest in transit connectivity within and around the redeveloped mall site. To improve mobility **within** and **around** the mall site, the County will:

- In the RFI, invite developers to propose street designs, transit stops and amenities, and trail connections that prioritize pedestrians and cyclists, as well as spaces that feel inviting and safe, with ample street amenities such as benches and lighting.
- Prioritize the completion of the first phase of the Gwinnett Transit Center to coincide with the mall redevelopment.
- Advance plans to transform access points and travel ways into Gwinnett Place Mall to make it more inviting to pedestrians and bikes and consider adding pedestrian and bike improvements to Ring Road.
- Build on findings from the upcoming engagement for the Transit Development Plan and Comprehensive Transportation Plans; design mobility options to ensure everyone – including those without cars – has easy access to and within the mall site.

Strategies for the Project Area

The impact of Mall redevelopment will extend beyond the mall site and reach the neighborhood of Gwinnett Place (the “Project Area.”) The redevelopment is an opportunity to support the community immediately surrounding the Mall to ensure that they continue to thrive. This section includes a strategy the County will implement to support small businesses, whose diversity draws visitors from across the region, by removing barriers for new and existing businessowners and ensuring they have the resources to grow.

1. SMALL BUSINESSES: Launch a small business loan program in partnership with and administered by a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). The design of this program will be informed by an engagement process and prioritize removing barriers to capital access for existing businesses in the Gwinnett Place area.

Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)

Regulated institutions such as community development banks and credit unions, and non-regulated institutions like loan and venture capital funds. They conduct a wide range of activities—including mortgage lending for first-time homebuyers, flexible underwriting for community facilities, and commercial loans for businesses in low-income areas. Through varying strategies, each CDFI contributes to the cultivation of a healthy and stable local economy.

Source: U.S. Department of Treasury

Note: The County defines the “Project Area” using the Regional Activity Center boundary defined in the Gwinnett County [2040 Unified Plan](#) Future Development Map.

Project Influence Area

- Gwinnett Place Mall Regional Activity Center
- County-owned properties



Countywide Strategies

The redevelopment of Gwinnett Place Mall presents an opportunity to shape the future of equitable redevelopment countywide. This section includes strategies that ensure the Gwinnett's growth will be harnessed as inclusive to diverse residents from all walks of life.

1. HOUSING: Create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to prevent indirect displacement of residents near new developments on County-owned properties.

- Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing and incentivize new affordable housing construction. Determine the design of the Fund and identify the appropriate governance structure and detailed uses of funds.

2. HOUSING: Create zoning tools to incentivize affordable housing production in appropriate districts.

- Consider inclusionary zoning measures, such as an Overlay District or other tools, and incentivize developers to construct affordable housing units on-site or contribute an in-lieu fee.

Overlay Zoning

A regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district, placed over an existing base zone(s), which identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying base zone. Regulations or incentives are attached to the overlay district to protect a specific resource or guide development within a special area.

Source: Center for Land Use Education

Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning, also called inclusionary housing, refers to local land use ordinances that require or encourage developers to include affordable units in new residential developments.

Source: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy;

3. HOUSING: Develop programming that helps Gwinnett residents build wealth through homeownership.

- Partner with local nonprofit organizations to bring existing homeownership programs to residents, and to design new programs informed by an engagement process. Programs will include HOME programs and programs that utilize CDBG funding, among others.

4. SMALL BUSINESSES: Complete the upcoming Disparity Study and update ordinances as appropriate to address findings.

5. CULTURAL ACTIVITY CENTER: Invest in transit connectivity to the redeveloped mall site to ensure Gwinnett residents can access the redeveloped site.

- Prioritize completion of planned updates to the nearby Gwinnett Transit Center and work to implement the first phase of the updates to coincide with Mall redevelopment. Ensure the renovated facility includes a mobility hub that supports multiple mobility options – such as rideshare, on-demand transit, bike-share, etc.
- Work with community partners to advance implementation of recommendations in the Satellite Blvd to Jimmy Carter Blvd BRT Study.

An Accountable and Transparent Process

Advisory Group

In parallel to advancing the previously identified strategies, the County will establish an Advisory Group composed of community members to ensure their voices are centered in the redevelopment process.

Structure

The Advisory Group will have clear advisory functions that grant them the autonomy needed to perform their work. The Group will be structured as a new entity established specifically to support the mall redevelopment.

Role

The Advisory Board will play the following roles during each phase of the redevelopment:

- **Planning and Design:** Meet regularly, receive updates from the County and developer(s), and provide counsel to the County throughout the planning, design, and construction phases of the project.
- **Ongoing Impact Monitoring:** Receive and review periodic status reports on project impacts that cover the following:
 - Mall redevelopment progress (for example, the number of housing units built by price point, number of local businesses served by the small business loan programs, number of community members participating in neighborhood programs on site, and other criteria).
 - Neighborhood impacts (such as change in rents in surrounding neighborhoods, business turnover, and other criteria).

Selection process

The County will conduct a transparent process to select members, including:

- Soliciting applications and nominations for potential Advisory Group members.
- The Board of Commissioners making a final decision with an eye toward ensuring the membership reflects the racial, ethnic, and generational diversity of neighborhoods surrounding the mall.
- A requirement that Advisory Group members comply with the County's ethics standards.

Proposed membership criteria

To ensure members are representative of the diverse community around the mall, selection criteria will include:

- Ensuring representation from residents, owners and employees of businesses, and nonprofits and community leaders active near the mall (which may be defined as the area that falls within census tracts that intersect with the 2-mile radius around the mall.)
- People from diverse age groups, to ensure the Mall redevelopment reflects intergenerational community needs.
- People with lived experience related to topics highlighted in the ERP, including housing cost burden, homelessness, women- and minority-owned business support, immigration services, among others.

What's Next

The adoption of the Equitable Redevelopment Plan by the Board of Commissioners is the first step in making this vision a reality. The next major milestones for the Reclaim Gwinnett Place Mall effort, all of which will be informed directly by this ERP, include:

- Working with the adjacent property owners on the mall site to gain shared understanding of its future and buy-in for the entire site's redevelopment.
- The County releasing a Request for Information (RFI) to identify potential developers for the mall redevelopment.
- Detailed site design processes by selected developer or mix of developers to create a site plan, mix of uses, and tenant mix.
- Development of County regulations, policies, and programs that will apply to areas outside of the mall site, including the Project Area and countywide, to implement the public mandate herein and the Board of Commissioners' vision to Reclaim Gwinnett Mall.

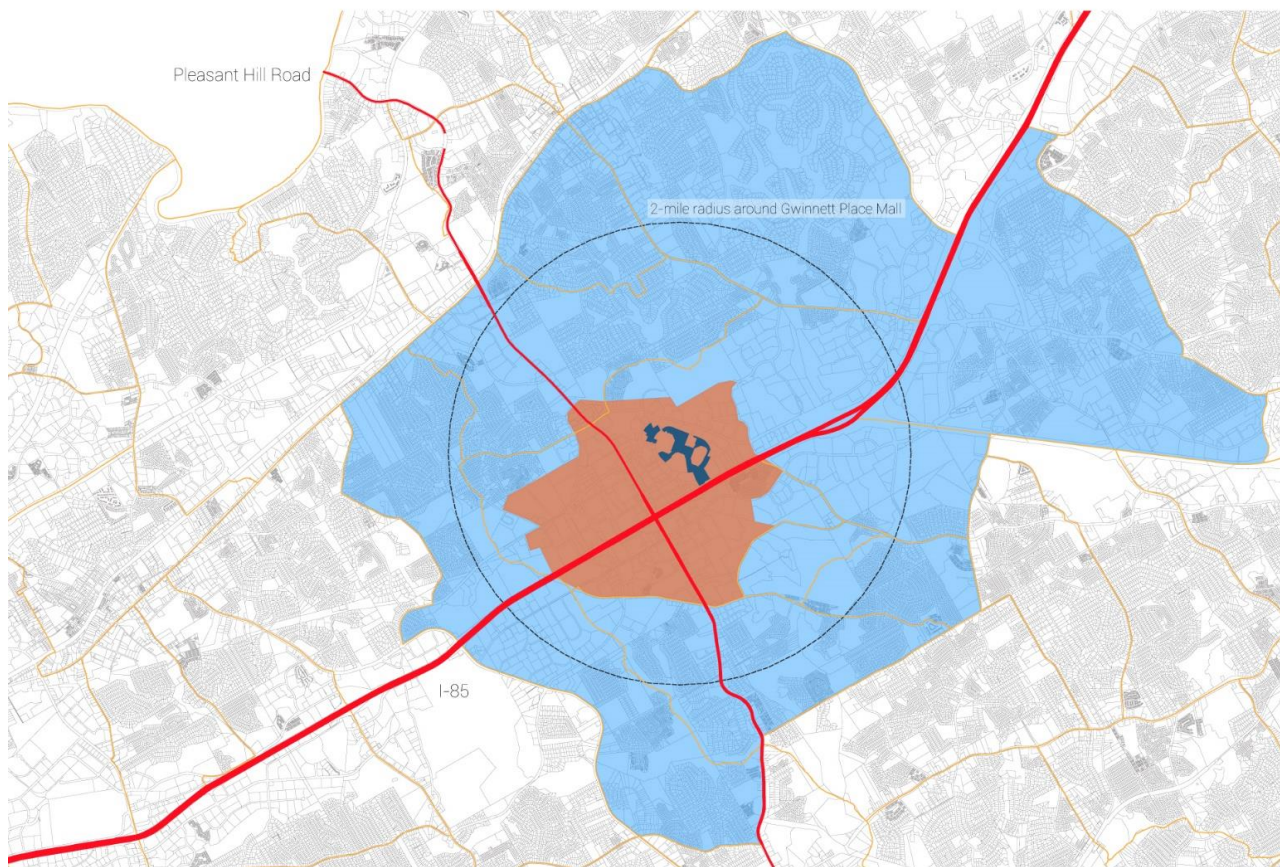
Throughout this process, the County will continue to create opportunities for Gwinnett residents to participate and shape the future of the Gwinnett Place Mall. Please continue to learn about the latest on Reclaim Gwinnett Place Mall via the County website.

Appendix

The following map illustrates boundaries for (1) the mall site, (2) Regional Activity Center “Project Area,” and (3) census tracts intersecting with the 2-mile radius around the mall.

Project Influence Area

-  Census tracts intersecting with the 2-mile radius around the mall
-  Gwinnett Place Mall Regional Activity Center
-  County-owned properties
-  Census tracts boundaries



This report was compiled by HR&A Advisors, Inc.

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