

From the Atlanta Business Chronicle

[:http://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/print-edition/2015/07/24/cids-work-to-raise-southside-commercial-property.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/print-edition/2015/07/24/cids-work-to-raise-southside-commercial-property.html)

CIDs work to raise Southside commercial property values

SUBSCRIBER CONTENT: Jul 24, 2015, 6:00am EDT

H.M. Cauley

The number of community improvement districts south of the city of Atlanta is growing as more businesses in the area see how improving safety and accessibility contributes to higher property values.

By agreeing to tax themselves to raise funds, members of a CID can tackle tasks from landscaping to business recruitment that may be difficult for a surrounding city or county to handle.

"This is what's happening in the area of Camp Creek Parkway, where the CID is in three or four jurisdictions," said [Emory Morsberger](#), president of the Stone Mountain CID whose expertise was tapped to create a similar organization around Airport West. "But having owners who want to dramatically improve the image of the area benefits everyone in the area, including homeowners, churches and schools."

See Also

- [Southside's film studio cluster growing](#)
- [Aerotropolis project to catalyze Southside development](#)
- [Southside home market on the rebound](#)
- [Projects address Clayton, Henry transportation needs](#)
- [2016 South Metro Development Outlook set Feb. 18](#)

A CID can leverage its self-tax proceeds to secure other funding such as grants.

The recently formed Airport South CID was established by business owners who wanted to address pressing issues in the district, said [Steve Berman](#), the CID's board chair and founder of OA Development that owns nine buildings in the district.

"In 2010, we noticed that the struggles in the area were more pronounced than in other parts of the metro area," he said. "The area around Riverdale Road and I-285 had office buildings, medical offices and hotels, but occupancy rates were dropping. That got us talking about a good revitalization tool — a CID."

Among the top issues Airport South is tackling are landscaping and beautification, public safety and lighting and signage consistent with what's already in place. "The airport is our neighbor, so we

want to work with them on extending the brand,” said Berman. “We may also consider rebranding Phoenix Boulevard.”

Nicole Hall, Airport South CID’s administrator, said many of the initial projects will be paid for from the \$185,750 annual budget, raised by taxing the 31 members. “We plan to get more done by coordinating with our sister CID, Airport West, instead of starting fresh on our own,” she said. “But we’ve already gotten MARTA to agree next month to put a route on Phoenix Boulevard that will be great for employees here.”

The year-old Airport West CID shares several of the South’s objectives. According to Chair Natalie Martin, senior property manager of Duke Realty Corp., the CID is funding initiatives around beautification, safety and signage. The 174-member group has hired a landscaping crew to maintain the main thoroughfares: Camp Creek Parkway, Welcome All Road, Roosevelt Highway, Best Road and Sullivan Road. A public safety director has been hired to coordinate 24-hour patrols using off-duty officers and private security contractors who will counteract problems of criminal trespassing and loitering. Efforts are ongoing to create signage to make it easier for drivers to find their way through the district. In addition, a master plan study is underway to determine and prioritize future projects. Out of the \$1.6 million budget, about \$400,000 goes toward beautification; \$300,000 to public safety; and \$300,000 for master plan and infrastructure studies.

Five years ago, the Boulevard CID began working on to improve its 4,800 acres from Fulton Industrial Boulevard to Campbellton Road. Executive Director [Gil Prado](#) said it’s the largest industrial corridor east of the Mississippi, with 550 warehouses and heavy truck traffic. The biggest motivation to form the CID was safety.

“We hired 30 Fulton County officers and worked with the district attorney’s office to get people who are picked up taken down the street to a community court to immediately see a judge. We’ve added patrols that have curbed prostitution; two years ago, you’d even see that during the daytime, and now we don’t see it anymore.”

Money from the Georgia Department of Transportation and the state has gone toward landscaping and beautification. “We’re now looking at one major project of about \$1 million along the I-20 east- and westbound ramps,” said Prado. “We’re also looking at mobility and safety, and building a park with a gateway sign to welcome people as they arrive in the district.”

The end goal is to increase economic development, said Prado. “Everything we do is focused on that. By making the district safer, cleaner and more vibrant, an existing business will stay, and new ones will be attracted.”

H.M. Cauley contributed to this story.