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A Report Card by Cindy Morley CID ECONOMIC PROGRESS



Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) continue to be a popular method of promoting economic growth in Georgia since their inception in 1988. These public-private partnerships grew out of a business improvement district model to address economic challenges by levying an additional voluntary property tax on commercial property owners to fund projects that otherwise would have been delayed or neglected.

Over the years CIDs evolved into a successful mechanism for funding vital projects and services in community sectors— including street and road construction, bridges, landscaping, new parks, water and sewage systems, signage, and public transportation systems.

For this feature, *James* chose seven CIDs in the metro Atlanta area to provide a snapshot of the progress which would probably have been unattainable even a decade ago.

NORTH FULTON CID

“It’s an exciting time for the North Fulton CID,” said Executive Director Brandon Beach and one of its founding members. Beach (also a state senator) provides an update on key projects:

Windward Phase II The North Fulton CID completed the second phase of its Windward Parkway capacity improvements in November 2020. The \$5.7 million project was a partnership between the North Fulton CID, State Road & Tollway Authority (GRTA), Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Fulton County, and Alpharetta. Its second phase included adding a triple left turn to the Windward Parkway at GA 400 interchange, adding a third receiving lane on Windward Parkway going westbound until Deerfield Parkway/Westside Parkway, and creating a double left turn for those travelling south from Windward Parkway to Westside Parkway.

NFCID Bus Shelter Program In 2019, the CID approved funding for a bus shelter program aligning with Alpharetta’s new bus shelter standard. The funding includes a reimbursement program for CID members who plan to upgrade a new or current bus shelter. In order to kick off the program, the CID also funded three new

upgraded shelters to be added on Windward Parkway, Haynes Bridge Road, and North Point Parkway.

Davis Drive Extension The North Fulton CID is currently working on the Davis Drive Extension project. This project will extend the already existing Davis Drive from where it currently ends off Mansell Road to Westside Parkway. The project is on schedule to break ground in late Spring of 2021. The North Fulton CID received a \$2 million grant from the State Road & Tollway’s Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank program for the construction.

BOULEVARD CID

Fulton County’s Boulevard team had a positive year despite COVID-19. “As the pandemic reshapes the global economy, many providers of high-demand goods and services are relying on a key metro-Atlanta commerce hub while adapting their business strategies to the new reality of COVID,” said Gil Prado, Executive Director. “Changes in consumer habits, logistics demand and production capabilities have heightened the importance of the Fulton Industrial Boulevard District— an established industrial corridor considered one of the largest in the Eastern United States.”

According to Prado, the commercial corridor, with more than 50 million square feet of industrial space, employs more than 28,000 essential workers in the manufacturing, warehousing and logistics industries. He said while COVID-19 caused many retail and office businesses to temporarily close for quarantine, many Fulton Industrial District businesses were experiencing record demand.

Truck traffic is one of the CID’s priorities. Currently, consultants are in the early stages of completing a freight cluster plan study supported in part by the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Beyond the freight study, the CID has already invested more than \$8 million into revitalization while also securing an additional \$8 million in public funding for a comprehensive revitalization strategy focused on public safety landscaping and beautification, transportation infrastructure improvement and economic development.

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PERIMETER CIDS

The Perimeter Community Improvement Districts (PCIDs) is home to the largest retail mall in the state, dozens of dining locations, premier retailers and multi- and single-family housing options— and has four rapid-transit MARTA stations in its Fulton-DeKalb area. Ann Hanlon, its tireless executive director, provides a list of some priority accomplishments and goals:

GA 400/I-285 Coordination with the State The PCIDs identified approximately 10 locations as priorities from traffic studies conducted in 2019 to improve traffic flow primarily to the Interstate Interchanges on GA 400 and I-285. Funding for design was approved in early 2020 and design was performed throughout the year.

Ashford Dunwoody Trail The proposed trail phases will construct bike/pedestrian facilities from Hammond to Mount Vernon Road. The projects are jointly funded by Dunwoody and the PCIDs. Phase 1 from Hammond to Perimeter Center West has completed design and is scheduled to begin construction in Quarter 2, 2021. Phase 2 is in the preliminary design phase and will begin right of way acquisition in Quarter 1 2021.

Ashford Dunwoody Trail & Corridor in Brookhaven This project will construct roadway alignment improvements, install landscaped medians, streetscapes and a trail

on the east side of Ashford Dunwoody road from I-285 to Montgomery Elementary School. It is funded by Brookhaven and the PCIDs. Design began in 2020 with right of way acquisition in late 2021, and construction in late 2022.

Perimeter Market Transit Plan The PCIDs initiated the Transit Plan in 2020 and is expected to conclude in Quarter 3 2021. The study will coordinate with all transit providers such as MARTA, GRTA, private shuttle providers as well as coordinate with GDOT and the Cities of Sandy Springs, Brookhaven and Dunwoody.

Mt. Vernon Trail in Sandy Springs The project will construct a multi-use trail on the south side of Mount Vernon Road from Barfield easterly to Abernathy. The portion will be part of a larger trail project from Barfield westerly to Hwy 9 and will be jointly funded by Sandy Springs and the PCIDs. Approximate start of construction is in 2022.

Dunwoody MARTA Station This is a joint Perimeter Connects/PCIDs project in coordination with MARTA to add enhancements inside of the station to provide riders with an improved walking experience from the station platform to various destinations.

"I am proud that when a state of emergency hit, the Central Perimeter market was able to adapt quickly," Hanlon says. "For years the PCIDs invested in teleworking

programs for our members. That groundwork enabled our big businesses in Perimeter to pivot quickly during the COVID shutdown. Additionally, the larger infrastructure projects in our market have continued to move forward. When employees re-enter the market in 2021, they will come back to improved intersections, new landscaping, and several large road improvements that will make for a better overall experience."

AEROTROPOLIS CIDS

Executive Director Gerald McDowell gets right to the point: "The Aerotropolis Atlanta CIDs is greatly committed to creating an economically strong, safe, attractive and vibrant community surrounding the world's most-traveled passenger airport. We are a catalyst for infrastructure enhancements through new investments, project planning, resource management, and partnership development."

Indeed, one of its biggest projects in 2020 is the completion of the seventh Diverging Diamond Interchange in Georgia. This was a \$13 million project designed to service Camp Creek Parkway at the intersection with I-285. It certainly has been additional help to relieve some Atlanta traffic congestion.

TOWN CENTER CID

Executive Director Tracy Rathbone Styfe and her team have been busy with various Cobb County projects in 2020. Some important ones are:

- Final funding for the South Barrett Reliever as well as a Chastain Road corridor study with the Duncan Road Corridor Improvement Alliance, a non-profit partner of the Town Center CID.
- Launch of a bikeshare program and connected to Cumberland CID's program.

And it has set top priorities, including:

- Acquiring right-of-way for South Barrett Reliever Phase 3 to proceed with the advertisement of the project for construction in the fall of 2021.
- Securing funding for the Noonday Creek Trail Bridge Over U.S. 41/Cobb Parkway.
- Alliance, non-profit partner of the Town Center CID:
 - Continued progress on Aviation Park Phase 2
 - Pursuing trail activation opportunities

"In addition to these shorter-term projects, we annually commit nearly \$1 million of our budget to maintenance and upkeep throughout the district," Rathbone Styfe says. "It is important to create an attractive destination for the region to enjoy and developments to thrive. That's why we invest in landscape maintenance, traffic light improvements and much more."



I am proud that when a state of emergency hit, the Central Perimeter market was able to adapt quickly. — ANN HANLON

"Completion of funding for South Barrett is historic for our district," she continues, "and we are immensely grateful to the Georgia Department of Transportation for its fervent support."

TUCKER-NORTHLAKE CID

The past year was a big one for the Tucker-Northlake CID in DeKalb County, according to Executive Director Matthew Lee. One of the major projects was the completion of the Downtown Tucker Grid Plan, which will guide the restoration and expansion of the street and alley grid that was created in the 1890s.

"Planners see the potential of downtown Tucker almost instantly," said Lee. "It doesn't take any convincing. The bones are here. It's just a matter of fleshing them out. We were also excited about the green space included in the plan. In Tucker we love Main Street, and

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PERIMETER 2020

For over two decades, the Perimeter Community Improvement District has invested in access, mobility, and quality of life to create a signature destination for corporate headquarters, hospitality, and retail. Here's a snapshot of our progress in 2020.

1.14M+
square feet of commercial space underway or completed in 2020

4.1
miles of trails under design in 2020

15%
of area employees work remotely 1+ days per week, saving them 70 hours a year

\$3.9M
invested in local and regional infrastructure by the PCIDs in 2020

6,000+
commuters arrive by transit daily, using the area's 3 MARTA stations and 4 Xpress routes

20%
discount on MARTA available to people who work in the district

Learn more about how we improve quality of life in Central Perimeter: perimetercid.org



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INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS. *It's what we do.*



FULTON INDUSTRIAL
BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
BoulevardCID.org

FAST MOVING. FORWARD THINKING.

We are celebrating a decade of service to the Fulton Industrial community, helping to strengthen the economic vitality of the largest industrial corridor in the Eastern United States.

we're excited to expand that same level of engagement down other streets."

In 2020 the state Department of Transportation agreed to convert Northlake Parkway to an express lane exit, tying the CID into the managed lane system. Lee is thrilled. "Fifty years ago, it was the construction of I-285 that resulted in the creation of the Northlake District. Planning for direct access to the express lanes is driving a similar resurgence in investment today."

"On one hand we have a small yet transformational transportation project in the heart of Tucker, just like any small town in Georgia. On the other hand there's a regional transportation focus to keep us connected to the rest of the state. We love the balance. It's such a great time to be involved."

BUCKHEAD CID

The CID in Atlanta's prominent Buckhead business district appears to just keep on ticking. "Despite the challenges ... 2020 has been notable for the Buckhead CID on several fronts," says Jim Durrett. The execu-



BUCKHEAD CID'S JIM DURRETT

tive director of Buckhead CID and executive director of the Buckhead Coalition says "we dubbed 2020 the 'Year of Construction' because we had three major projects—sidewalk improvements for Americans with Disabilities compliance, streetscape improvements in the West Village and complete street improvements on Peachtree Road. That in itself is a lot, but we topped it by entering a new partnership with the Buckhead Coalition and two other local groups that allows us to collaborate on solutions to a full range of challenges facing our community."

"One major challenge that we're addressing right now is an alarming increase in crime," Durrett declares. "The BCID has invested in a supplemental patrol and additional cameras to improve security, and we will look for additional opportunities to restore public confidence in Buckhead's safety."

Cindy Morley is a staff writer for James and InsiderAdvantage Georgia.

The Cold War at 75



TWO GEORGIANS REFLECT

by Stan Deaton & W. Todd Groce



Late last year the Georgia Historical Society addressed the 75th anniversary of the Cold War's inception. It launched a compelling Georgia History Festival to study this period's incredible impact on Georgia and the nation—a virtual series of events that reached 250,000 students and teachers throughout the state. James asked the Society's CEO and its historian to offer their reflections on these 75 years that truly reshaped America.

The year 2020 has been one of remarkable historic events that few could have foreseen last January. From impeachment to the pandemic and its concomitant economic downturn, widespread social unrest and a tumultuous presidential election, Americans have been living through a series of singular events that have fundamentally reshaped our world.

Seventy-five years ago, those who lived through the year 1945 experienced similar upheaval. The Second World War had been going on for almost six years but rapidly moved toward its conclusion as the Nazi empire fell in April, the same month that President Franklin Roosevelt died just three months into his fourth term. That summer, as America prepared to launch a full-scale invasion of the Japanese home islands that might have cost a million lives and extended the conflict four more years, word came that a new and profoundly destructive weapon had brought the war to a shattering and immediate conclusion.

In the blink of an eye, the war was over and America had crossed the threshold into the nuclear age, never to return. At the same time, peace abruptly ended the wartime alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union. Warily eyeing each other across Eastern and Western Europe so recently freed from the Nazi grip, with the common enemy in Germany destroyed, the two nations found themselves now the most powerful countries on earth.

THE U.S. & WEST VERSUS COMMUNISM

They were two vastly different peoples, with seemingly incompatible economic and governing systems, locked in a titanic ideological battle for supremacy, with one holding

the world's only nuclear weapons. Within only four years, though, they would both possess nuclear arsenals.

The most deadly military conflict in human history ended with such high hopes for world peace, only to transform the global inferno into a Cold War that brought the constant threat of nuclear holocaust and dominated the globe for the next half century. Its impact would be felt in all phases of American society and would fundamentally reshape American political, social and economic life. Virtually no part of the American fabric would be left untouched.

The names, places, and events of the next 45 years would become part of the American lexicon that would come to symbolize the era: Iron Curtain, the Berlin airlift, the Marshall Plan, containment, mutually assured destruction, massive retaliation, massive resistance, brinkmanship, NATO, the Warsaw Pact, Korea, witch hunts, Communist bloc, McCarthyism, Red China, Korea, Little Rock, Sputnik, missile gap, the Berlin Wall, the Cuban missile crisis, Vietnam, the draft, Détente, SALT, Chairman Mao, Glasnost and, of course "Tear Down This Wall!"

To prosecute the Cold War against the Soviets, the size of the federal government—and the taxes to support it—grew to gargantuan proportions. The "military-industrial complex" of which President Dwight Eisenhower warned swelled to such power through the Pentagon, the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency—agencies that did not even exist in pre-war America. They would collectively dominate the federal budget at home and American foreign policy, seen and unseen, abroad.

For nearly half a century American politics became a battleground between politicians of both parties who accused their rivals as being "soft on Communism," and calling for an arms buildup to fill "missile gaps" that ensured American superiority.

By the early 1970s, Pentagon planners calculated that in the event of a nuclear launch of American missiles, if only 100 U.S. bombs landed on their assigned Soviet targets an estimated 37 million Russians would die and 59 percent of Soviet industrial capacity would be destroyed. With 300 missiles falling on their targets, those numbers would rise to 96 million deaths, figures so grotesque as to defy human understanding. And still the arms race continued.

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Investing in Our Community Means Planning for Growth

The Town Center CID is continually planning projects that look toward the future. By thoughtfully investing in infrastructure and placemaking initiatives, we will see continued growth in jobs, real estate and higher education. With such anticipated economic strength, we are creating a community where businesses, residents and visitors can connect to and become a part of our accessible, inviting regional destination.

Follow our vision for Town Center's growth at towncentercid.com

