



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

JAMES

THE GEORGIA LOTTERY
HITS AN HISTORIC MILESTONE
PAGE 39

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL READERSHIP IN GEORGIA



SINCE 1993

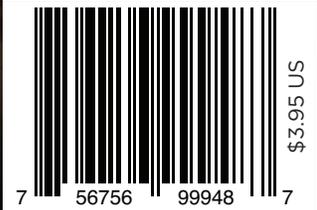
GEORGIA'S STUDENTS

\$25,000,000,000

TWENTY-FIVE BILLION DOLLARS



Gretchen Corbin



GEORGIA IS NOW A NATIONAL LEADER IN CYBERSECURITY
MEET A NEW FIGHTER AGAINST GEORGIA'S CRIMINAL GANGS
REGIONAL FEATURE: ALPHARETTA— A MODEL FOR GEORGIA CITIES

Full Service
High
Complexity
Clinical
Laboratory



Accurate | Reliable | Fast

ONLY
6-48
HOURS

OVERVIEW



ABOUT US

LifeHope Labs is a full-service high complexity lab that blends the latest methods with cutting edge technology to provide comprehensive test results. Our approach has always been simple: to provide testing based on the specific needs of clinicians and their patients.

- Fastest turn-around time in the industry
- One Solution for all your testing needs from start to finish
- CAP Accreditation
- EMR integrations or easy to use Client Portal
- Friendly/Live customer service

LAB SERVICES

- Blood
- Covid-19
- Molecular Diagnostics (RPP, STI, UTI, Wound and Nails)
- Pharmacogenomics (PGX)
- Toxicology
- Women's Health
- Phlebotomist and Collectors

CLIENTS

- Hospital Labs
- Provider Clinics
- Senior Living Communities
- Employers
- Drug Courts
- Health Departments
- Other Labs
- Nursing Homes

Website: www.lifehopelabs.com
Lab Portal: www.life.mylabcare.com

Phone : (404) 891-0121
Email : info@lifehopelabs.com

5009 Roswell Rd
Sandy Springs, GA 30342

ECONOMIC

DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR

On a Roll

by Patrick Hickey

Longtime *James* readers are familiar with Georgia's various public-private Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) and many movers-and-shakers in the business community have watched as they have changed old or abandoned commercial centers into revitalized communities. Gil Prado, the executive director of the Boulevard CID, is a great person to be interviewed about Georgia's CID success story since he, the Boulevard CID board and its stakeholders are one of the drivers in accelerating economic growth in part of a metro Atlanta region that's remaking itself.

If you are not already familiar with a CID, it is a defined geographic area where a majority of its commercial property owners representing the large majority of property value pay extra property taxes to help fund public improvements. The bottom line: This is a great example of private enterprise meeting public sector needs. And, by the way, because CIDs like Boulevard are so effective at attracting additional resources, their communities get more effective ways to manage and deliver projects and services.

In this connection, Prado was honored at the annual South Metro Development Outlook Conference earlier this year as "Economic Developer of the Year." The conference audience learned that the Boulevard CID has 50 million square feet of industrial space, of which some 97 percent is occupied, and boasts of 28,000 jobs with more being created. There is especially impressive work being done around the Fulton Industrial Boulevard and the Interstate-20 interchange. But let's let Prado tell the story—which he outlined in a recent interview with us.

JAMES Could you tell our readers about your background and how you came to be executive director of the Boulevard CID?

GIL PRADO I've been the executive director for 10 years now. My background prior to that included an

continued on page 36





FULTON INDUSTRIAL BOULEVARD
EXISTING CONDITION



FULTON INDUSTRIAL BOULEVARD
IMPROVED STREETSCAPE PHOTOSIMULATION

additional decade of work in the public, private and non-profit sectors, working in all aspects related to the built environment— from public policy to real estate development, urban planning, community and economic development.

This broad experience has helped me be effective at my current role where I work on issues and solutions across sectors and disciplines. I help address the needs of businesses and commercial property owners by working with stakeholders, local and state government to achieve the best outcomes and bring needed investment into the District. Although challenging, our work to make the District safer, cleaner, more accessible and vibrant resonates with both businesses, residents and local government. So it's a win-win for everyone.

JAMES What are a few of the dozens of major projects that the CID is involved in that you are especially proud of?

PRADO We've been involved in several projects and programs over the years that has really helped change the

district for the better. From the very beginning, we've been laser-focused in revitalizing the areas surrounding the I-20 / Fulton Industrial Blvd Interchange. This is the front-door of the District where thousands of people come through to work every day.

However, this area suffered from decades of pervasive blight, disinvestment and crime. So we took a holistic and incremental but persistent approach to helping turn it around, focusing first on increased public safety, weekly landscaping maintenance including routine litter removal. In 2016 we commissioned a complete revisioning of the public spaces. In 2018 we were able to access grants and other public funds such as TSPLOST to begin construction on \$2 million in public improvements that included new streetscapes, sidewalks, decorative crosswalks, gateway signage, streetlights, ADA ramps, median modifications to make turning movements easier and safer, and a one-of-a-kind 16-foot tall sculpture at the I-20 WB off ramp intersection with Fulton Industrial Boulevard. This helped breathe new life into the area. This project was transformational and, although a constant work in progress, it is a beautiful gateway that people can be proud to come to work to.

JAMES These projects obviously require funding. Aside from the CID's own funding, does it receive funding from outside sources? Can the federal government provide funds?

PRADO To deliver these improvements, CIDs will work with multiple agencies and funding partners. The project mentioned above had at least four sources of funds, including our CID, the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Fulton County TSPLOST and the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank.

Federal funds are also critical for transportation infrastructure improvement projects and are typically accessed through competitive grant applications through the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). CIDs are most effective in attracting these investments into their districts by leveraging their local funds to provide the required 20 percent local match towards a grant application for state and federal transportation funds. Typically, the higher the local match, the more competitive the grant application is for a project.

JAMES What is your vision for the future of your CID and what is the outlook for all of Georgia's CIDs as we enter a period of recession and economic uncertainty?

PRADO Our vision for the Boulevard CID is to continue to improve the commercial vitality of the district through increased public safety. This includes investment in crime fighting technology, expanding our landscape maintenance areas and implementing our recently completed Freight Cluster Plan which calls for \$30 million in transportation infrastructure improvements over the next decade and beyond. These investments will lead into economic development by creating an environment where businesses can continue to thrive, grow, generate jobs and continually contribute to the local and regional economy.

I have a very positive outlook for our District and other Georgia CIDs. Georgia is growing and, along with other sunbelt regions, is expected to continue growth for many years and decades into the future.

Additionally, for us, the outlook for industrial real estate is very good as space for logistics, manufacturing and ecommerce continues to experience increased demand. Transportation funding is another key element for us. Even in times of economic uncertainty, infrastructure funding typically enjoys broad support across diverging constituencies because it helps to improve the economy by generating jobs and making roads safer and reducing traffic. After all, no one likes sitting in traffic.

Patrick Hickey is the office manager as well as a writer for InsiderAdvantage Georgia and James magazine.



**ROBINSON
REPUBLIC**

A leading voice in Georgia politics and policy, Brian Robinson tells your story with style, precision and effectiveness when your message needs to reach beyond the Capitol walls.

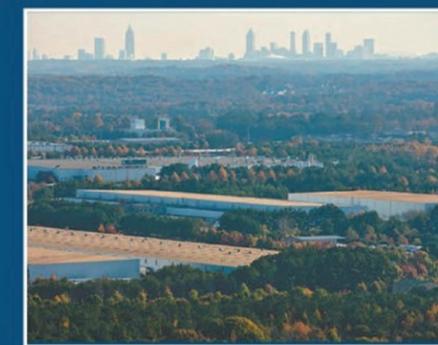


- Public Affairs Communications
- Public Relations
- Crisis Communications
- Media Training

BRIAN@ROBINSONREPUBLIC.COM

FULTON INDUSTRIAL  **BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

Fast Moving. Forward Thinking



12

YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Celebrating twelve years of service to the Fulton Industrial community.

BoulevardCID.org