



There is an old saying in the wine business that it's easier to make bad wine from good grapes than it is to make good wine from bad

## Transformation

grapes. The most important elements of good wine-making are quality grapes, a careful and correct process, and time. If done well, it is possible to transform a grape into a fine wine that will continue to improve with the passage of time.

For more than 16 years the Town Center Area Community Improvement District has been transforming quality ingredients into an enjoyable product. It began with such good grapes as the Town Center at Cobb Mall, KSU, a good location and excellent infrastructure. Through a careful, deliberate and collaborative process, the TCACID is transforming into a more complete and complex submarket of Atlanta. Year after year we continue to see the fruits of our labor at the time of harvest. The true character and flavor of our community is finally beginning to emerge.



**Mason Zimmerman**  
Chairman

The TCACID is now much more than a series of projects, goals and initiatives. Our crops are the result of seeds that were planted years ago and nurtured to produce a yield that can now be enjoyed by all.

Thousands of dollars and hours invested in landscape enhancements and maintenance have produced a more beautiful community in which to work, shop, live or play. The time, effort and money invested in new roadway improvements have produced better connectivity and reduced traffic congestion for better travel experiences. New trails, sidewalks and greenspace enhancements have improved the quality of life for residents, tenants and shoppers. Our community has never been more vibrant and connected yet we are convinced that our best

days lie ahead.

As co-owners and co-laborers in the vineyard, together with other stakeholders, we try to maximize our yield while also protecting the crop for future harvest. We have many exciting initiatives planned or underway in 2014 and we are very optimistic about the future of the Town Center Area CID. Our goal remains to continue to produce a product that can be enjoyed by all and one that will continue to improve with the passage of time.

In the middle of a long hike on Noonday Creek Trail or after a morning of shopping at Town Center at Cobb Mall, why not head to the park and enjoy a picnic overlooking a pond?

That's the vision behind a planned 42-acre park placed on the drawing board by the TCACID and drawing interest from other groups eager to see the project come to life. The TCACID is leading the transformation of the marshy, kudzu-laden site into an amenities-filled green space.

"A coalition of stakeholders is now examining what can be done in the area," said TCACID Chairman Mason Zimmerman. So far, he and other TCACID board members have received interest from various Cobb government entities, and from owners of property adjacent to the parcel of land.

From the start, the park would connect the Town Center area community in ways likely to stir second thoughts about using a car. Pedestrian trails and bike lanes, plus access to local and regional transit, would provide connectivity to Kennesaw State University and its stadium and sports complex, as well as the mall and a mixed-use development currently under construction.

***The 42-acre site that is the focus of the proposed park is unsuitable for development and ideal as a green space that promotes common livable-community concepts.***

The site is bordered by the mall, interstate 575, and George Busbee Parkway, and runs adjacent to Noonday Creek.

## Park would symbolize true nature of 'live, work and play'



"This is a phenomenal opportunity to develop a dormant area into something with a positive economic affect and quality-of-life influence," Zimmerman said.

In addition to the Noonday Creek Trail, which runs from one end of the property to the other, amenities might include an amphitheater, woodland playground, lakeside pavilion, lakeside viewing dock, nature center, bird nesting boxes, picnic area, and wooded-area observation station.

**Our people make our MOSAIC unique!**



As noted in the letter by TCACID Chairman Mason Zimmerman, the TCACID has been transforming the district for many years. But

## TCACID work more visible to the public

only recently has the visibility of what has been planned, studied, funded and ultimately implemented been so great.

"I'm proud to see the number of meaningful projects the TCACID has been involved in and will continue to be involved in," Zimmerman said. "In terms of CID projects started or completed, plus the amount of job growth, investment and expansion in the district, 2013 was an incredible year."

As one example, the Big Shanty Connector has proven to be a significant benefit to area motorists. A recent study shows that the number of east-west trips on Chastain Road has increased by 39% since before the road was constructed, while the delay in traffic has decreased by as much as 50%. The estimated travel-time value of the reduction in delays is \$3.3 million per year, according to the study.

Other results are even more quantitative.

Because of the foundations laid by the TCACID, progress has been seen in the amount of redevelopment – expansions and renewals – as much as new development in the area. In addition, density in retail and

multi-family property is increasing, while biking and running are permeating the culture and making an impact on the metro area.

Here is a review of key accomplishments of the TCACID in 2013:

- \* The TCACID created key partnerships to help fund the planned Skip Spann Connector. In addition to relieving congestion on Chastain Road and Barrett Parkway, the Connector will dramatically improve pedestrian, bike and car accessibility for Kennesaw State University students, staff and faculty traveling from the main campus west of I-75 to KSU's educational and recreational facilities on the east side of I-75.
- \* Construction continued on the Noonday Creek Trail system, a 7-mile trail that runs through the center of the TCACID. When the remaining half of the trail is completed in the summer of 2014, it will provide outdoor enthusiasts a connection between Kennesaw Mountain and Town Center at Cobb Mall.
- \* In 2013, the TCACID also continued maintenance and enhancements to area landscaping, which now covers nearly 20 miles of primary roadways in the district. It also completed roadway improvements to Barrett Parkway and Home Center Drive, and comprehensive road and intersection improvements to the corridor of I-575 at Barrett Parkway.

Interacting with plants makes us healthier, more empathetic toward others, less stressed or anxious, more motivated, and more likely to behave positively. So say studies by *Healthy Parks Healthy People*, a group dedicated to researching the link between people and nature.

In the Town Center Area, landscaping is a priority, though it requires a lot of work. In addition to the actual planting of foliage in traffic islands and embankments, particularly along interstate entrance and exit ramps, landscaping includes creating hardscapes, trash removal, maintenance, trimming, weed control, seasonal decorating, and thinning of trees.

**"Places matter. Their rules, their scale, their design . . . They map our lives."**

**— Rebecca Solnit,**

By the end of 2013, the TCACID had spent \$234,000 on landscape maintenance and another \$12,000 in landscape design for its

## Area landscaping provides eye candy – and a lot more

latest area of focus, that of I-575 at Barrett Parkway. In addition, more than \$54,000 was spent to plant in the medians along Barrett Parkway, Chastain Road, and George Busbee Parkway.

For 2014, the TCACID will set aside about \$300,000 for landscaping services throughout the district.



Pending development of the Skip Spann Connector marks another step in easing travel in the Town Center area. Specifically,

## Skip Spann Connector adds another layer of traffic relief

it is expected to reduce – by nearly 20% – traffic congestion along the I-75 interchange of adjacent Chastain Road to the south.

By linking Frey Road and Busbee Drive at Interstate 75, the connector will also improve access from Kennesaw State University to the access ramps of the future northwest-corridor managed lanes. And, it will facilitate pedestrian and bicycle traffic between the KSU campus west of I-75 and the University's new sports complex.

The project is named after Thomas E. "Skip" Spann, the 1997 founding chairman of the TCACID who served on the organization's Board of Directors until his death in August 2012. Active here long before his role at the CID, Spann moved to Cobb County in 1986 and was manager of Town Center at Cobb Mall until 2004.

Spann also served as the director of special initiatives for Kennesaw State University's development group, and is widely credited for leveraging \$27 million of TCACID



revenues into \$106 million in local, state and federal funds. The TCACID helped develop and fund the commemorative, \$17.8 million project. Contributing \$1.5 million, the TCACID has been joined in funding the project by Cobb County DOT (\$5 million), Georgia DOT (\$10.6 million), and Kennesaw State University (\$700,000).

"The Skip Spann Connector is another model for public-private partnerships and the TCACID's commitment to improving the quality of life in the Town Center area," said Lanie Shipp, Executive Director of the TCACID. During the planning stages, the project was praised by those involved as one of the fastest-moving state highway projects undertaken.



"This project was made shovel-ready in record time for \$10.6 million in state funding," Shipp said, "which is why we called it 'A Race to the Finish.'" Environmental work on the project was completed in June of 2012. 2013 saw the concept report approved in February, the right-of-way completed in August, and the ground-breaking celebrated in October.

Completion of the Skip Spann Connector is expected in 2015.



## The Numbers

### January 2013 - December 2013

Traffic Control/Wayfinding [0.42%]	\$4,960.00
Streetscapes/Landscaping [24.68%]	<b>\$292,184.00</b>
Studies/Planning [0.63%]	\$7,500.00
Infrastructure Projects [74.27%]	<b>\$879,326.22</b>
Totals [100.00%]	\$1,183,970.22

### Inception 1997 - December 2013

Traffic Control/Wayfinding [3.01%]	\$799,182.95
Streetscapes/Landscaping [6.88%]	<b>\$1,827,085.70</b>
Studies/Planning [10.24%]	\$2,720,162.44
Infrastructure Projects [79.88%]	<b>\$21,220,019.56</b>
Totals [100.00%]	\$26,566,450.65

In 2014, residents of the Town Center area will find the TCACID and other organizations working on several exciting projects all representing a broad spectrum of local interests. Here is what's planned so far:

Center at Cobb Mall, bordered by George Busbee Parkway, Noonday

## Variety of projects on the horizon for 2014

- \* Building on the successes of the Big Shanty Extension and the Skip Spann Connector, the TCACID is planning the **South Barrett Reliever**, which will cross I-75 at Barrett Lakes Boulevard to improve east-west connectivity in the area. Once again, public and private

Creek, and I-575. See more about the park earlier in this report.

- \* A host of other infrastructure and transportation projects include **wayfinding signage** that serves as a collective gateway to the district; phase 2C of the **Noonday Creek Trail**, which represents the trail's completion; and a **managed-lanes project** along the I-75/575 corridors



entities are expected to collaborate on the project, which was initiated as part of the TCACID's 2004 Master Plan.

from Cumberland to Town Center.

- \* At Cobb County Airport-McCollum Field, changes expected for 2014 include a **customs inspections service** that will allow the landing of private flights from overseas, a **new control tower** approved in December 2013 by the Cobb County Commission, and the **extension of two runway-bound taxiways**. The control tower, to be funded equally by Cobb County and the Federal Aviation Administration, should help increase safety at the airport, which serves owners of about 200 aircraft and contributes an estimated \$112 million annually to the local economy. All three projects are expected to be completed by this fall.

Underscoring the importance of these projects and others is a recent Livable Centers Initiative award made to the TCACID by the Atlanta Regional Commission. The TCACID received the largest award provided by the ARC – \$114,000 – as part of the regional authority's \$800,000 contribution to 11 metro Atlanta communities. The grant was provided to the TCACID to help fund major planning updates.

- \* A **42-acre public park** with a lot of planned amenities but yet to be named is under way in the heart of the Town Center area. It will lie north of Town



## Who we are...

### Directors - /r

Mason Zimmerman, Chairman  
 Kerry O'Brien, Treasurer  
 Kelly Keappler, Vice Chairman  
 Lanie Shipp, Executive Director  
 Dan Styf  
 William E. (Ed) Allen  
 Dan Buyers  
 Jeff Gramlich *[not pictured]*



### Staff

Mary Lou Stephens,  
 Communications  
 Director

Jennine Duelge,  
 Finance Director

Robert Maddux,  
 Project Manager

Lynn Rainey,  
 Legal Counsel

## Where we are...



**Town Center Area CID** | 245 TownPark Drive, Suite 440, Kennesaw, GA 30144 | [www.tcacid.com](http://www.tcacid.com) | 678-354-0701

