

September 2011

# Edgewood- Candler Park MARTA Station Charrette

Southface Energy Institute

MARTA

City of Atlanta

Livable Communities Coalition

The Civic League for Regional Atlanta

Columbia Residential

Atlanta Regional Commission

Georgia Organics

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Atlanta Commercial Board of REALTORS®

Mason Avenue Cooperative

Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership



April 13-16, 2011





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# CONTENTS

|  |           |   |           |
|--|-----------|---|-----------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                                   | <b>1</b>  | <b>The Process</b>                                  | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Goals of the Charrette</b>                              | <b>1</b>  | <b>Initial Design Concepts</b>                      | <b>21</b> |
| MARTA TOD Guidelines                                       | 1         | Concept One - Central Commons                       | 21        |
| Advance Edgewood Plans                                     | 1         | Concept Two - Pocket Parks                          | 21        |
| Coordination Among Essential TOD Stakeholders              | 1         | Concept Three - Main Street                         | 22        |
| <b>Resulting Design Concepts</b>                           | <b>2</b>  | Mid-course Review and Feedback                      | 22        |
| <b>Implementation</b>                                      | <b>2</b>  |   |           |
|  |           | <b>Tour of the Final Plans</b>                      | <b>23</b> |
| <b>Charrette &amp; Design Team</b>                         | <b>3</b>  | <b>Pocket Parks Concept</b>                         | <b>23</b> |
|  |           | <b>Central Commons Concept</b>                      | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Sustainable Communities Focus</b>                       | <b>6</b>  |   |           |
|  |           | <b>Transportation Enhancements</b>                  | <b>31</b> |
| <b>Edgewood Neighborhood</b>                               | <b>7</b>  |   |           |
| <b>Location</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>Zoning and Smart Code</b>                        | <b>33</b> |
| <b>History</b>   | <b>7</b>  |   |           |
|  |           | <b>Green Building</b>                               | <b>34</b> |
| <b>Transit Oriented Development in Edgewood - Why Now?</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>LEED ND Scoring Summary</b>                      | <b>34</b> |
| <b>Moreland LCI</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>EarthCraft Communities Scoring Summary</b>       | <b>34</b> |
| Plan Recommendations for Station Site                      | 10        | <b>LEED Mid-rise Scoring Summary</b>                | <b>34</b> |
| <b>Edgewood Redevelopment Plan</b>                         | <b>11</b> | <b>EarthCraft Multifamily Scoring Summary</b>       | <b>35</b> |
| Plan Recommendations for Station Site                      | 11        |   |           |
| Specific Housing Recommendations Per Plan                  | 11        | <b>Healthy Communities</b>                          | <b>35</b> |
|  |           |   |           |
| <b>MARTA TOD Guidelines</b>                                | <b>12</b> | <b>Implementation</b>                               | <b>38</b> |
|  |           |   |           |
| <b>Current Conditions</b>                                  | <b>14</b> | <b>Appendix A - Pre-Charrette Design Assessment</b> | <b>39</b> |
| <b>Neighborhood Demographics</b>                           | <b>14</b> |   |           |
| <b>Land Use</b>  | <b>14</b> |   |           |
| <b>Transit</b>   | <b>17</b> |   |           |
| Station Users  | 17        |   |           |
| Parking at the Station                                     | 18        |   |           |
| <b>Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation</b>                  | <b>18</b> |   |           |





## Executive Summary

Southface and the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) led a group of local non-profits, professionals and stakeholders to undertake the Edgewood design charrette in April of 2011. This charrette spanned four days and focused on exploring and formulating a vision for a transit oriented development (TOD) on the underutilized MARTA parking lot on the south side of the Edgewood/Candler Park MARTA station, in the Edgewood community of Atlanta. The Edgewood community was chosen for the focus of these efforts because of the considerable planning and implementation progress that the City of Atlanta, Zeist Foundation, MARTA and the Edgewood Community have already undertaken.

## Goals of the Charrette

### MARTA TOD Guidelines

In 2010 MARTA officially adopted transit oriented development (TOD) guidelines. This adopted policy is meant to provide the entire community of TOD stakeholders with a common vocabulary and frame of reference, general direction and specific strategies and techniques for TOD development around station areas. The Edgewood charrette process serves as a model for advancing these transit oriented development guidelines at MARTA station areas, a goal in both the ARC and MARTA work programs.

### Advance Edgewood Plans

In addition to advancing the merits and goals of MARTA's TOD Guidelines, the Edgewood charrette also serves as an opportunity to further advance the previous planning studies conducted around both the Candler Park and Edgewood communities, all of which recommend higher density housing and mixed-use nodes at the south side of the Edgewood/Candler Park MARTA station site.

For these communities specifically, this TOD charrette represents an opportunity to drill down to the micro level to prepare a concept plan for the underutilized parking lot that is cognizant of previous plan recommendations and findings from all of these past documents. All resulting concepts and ideas are the result of community input and involvement throughout the charrette and as represented in previous planning documents.

### Coordination among Essential TOD Stakeholders

This charrette process recognized an unprecedented level of coordination among many stakeholder groups in the Atlanta region who are essential to furthering sustainable TOD development. The charrette project management and planning team, consisting of Southface, ARC, MARTA, the City of Atlanta, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Livable Communities Coalition (LCC) and Columbia Residential, moved ahead with assistance from The Home Depot Foundation and support from the National Board of REALTORS® Smart Growth Council. These groups brought together their collective expertise and experience to advance an overarching goal of creating and fostering healthy, accessible, inclusive and sustainable communities in the Atlanta region.



A charrette brings together a variety of experts and stakeholders to develop plans and solutions.

## Resulting Design Concepts

The multi-day charrette process created two final concept plans for the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA station south parking lot— a “Pocket Parks” concept and a “Central Commons” concept.

The Pocket Parks concept contains two 4-5 story mixed use buildings that are built around two separate parking garages. The project maintains the existing MARTA tower and escalators, but it develops covered MARTA bus bays under the eastern parking garage. The design maintains its focus on the concept of pocket parks, with a splash fountain park at the corner of Whitefoord Ave. and LaFrance St., a “Community Living Room” park between the extensions of Hutchinson and Lowry and Greenspace along the street frontage. A key component of this site is the development of a Transit Plaza where civic space and retail would be located.

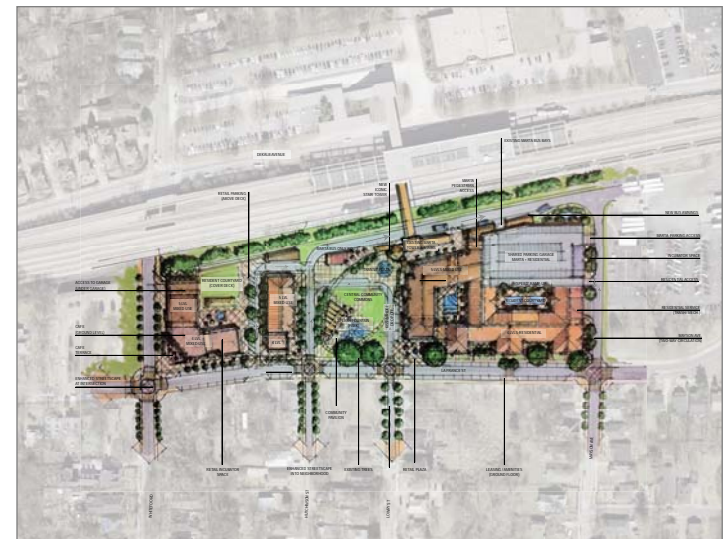
The Central Commons concept contains three 4-5 story mixed use buildings that contain one main parking garage and a smaller below grade podium garage that is covered by a residential courtyard. The centerpiece of the development is a central community commons and an iconic MARTA tower built onto the existing MARTA Tower and escalator. This tower provides a key focal point for the development fostering a greater sense of “place.” The Central Commons concept contains a smaller transit plaza than the Pocket Parks scheme and maintains the current MARTA Bus loading area. The Central Commons concept has garage access from Whitefoord Avenue.

## Implementation

The charrette is only the first step in developing a TOD development at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station. A successful development will only occur if the team members of the charrette work deliberately and cooperatively in pursuing development opportunities at the station. A work program is included at the end of the report.



Public meetings were held to get feedback on the proposed plan.



A Site Plan Developed During the Process





## Charrette & Design Team

### Atlanta Board of REALTORS®

**Atlanta Board of REALTORS®** Founded in 1910, the Atlanta Board of REALTORS® has been an instrumental factor in the growth of organized real estate in the state of Georgia for over a century. With nearly 6,000 members, Atlanta is the largest Board in the state of Georgia and considered to be one of the strongest, most successful and progressive REALTOR® Boards across the nation.

### Atlanta Commercial Board of REALTORS®

**Atlanta Commercial Board of REALTORS®** The Atlanta Commercial Board of REALTORS® is one of the largest commercial REALTOR® associations in the nation with over 2,200 members. The ACBR is a professional trade association which exists to enhance the business opportunities of its members through access to pertinent real estate information, education, recognition, ethics, legislative advocacy, and networking. The REALTOR® membership represents a cross section of the commercial real estate industry including brokers, appraisers, property managers, developers, owners, and consultants. Affiliate members include mortgage bankers, title companies, law firms, engineering companies, environmental consultants, and more.

### Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

**ARC** ARC was created in 1947 by the Georgia General Assembly as a regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the Atlanta metropolitan area. For 60 years, ARC has focused the region's leadership, attention, and resources on key issues of regional consequence such as aging services, governmental services, leadership development, research and mapping, workforce development, environmental

planning, land use planning, mobility and air quality issues. The 39 member Board made up of local officials and citizen members govern and advises the work of ARC.

### City of Atlanta, Department of Planning and Community Development



“Preserving our historical past, maintaining the livability of the present, and transforming our future through the implementation of the highest quality planning, building, code compliance, and housing services and programs to enhance the level of service we provide to all people of Atlanta” is the vision of the City of Atlanta’s Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). Services are provided thru the Offices of Planning, Buildings, Housing and Code Enforcement.

### Columbia Residential

Columbia Residential is a nineteen-year old Atlanta based business enterprise. Its Principals have developed more than \$500 million of residential multi-family and single family



housing with a focus on mixed-income developments. Columbia offers a full range of real estate services including land use analysis, land acquisition, master planning, development, financing, investment, project management, construction management

and property management. Columbia uses its comprehensive internal resources to assist neighborhoods, non-profit Community Development Corporations, financial institutions, governmental entities and public housing authorities in achieving their goals of providing well-structured, high quality affordable housing communities.

## Greenrock Partnership



Greenrock Partnership is a planning and design consultant firm committed to creating quality living environments. Greenrock Partnership works in the public and private sector, either directly for clients or supporting other consultants. Projects include single family homes, multi-family and mixed-use communities, parks, offices, shopping centers and streetscapes.

## JHP Architecture / Urban Design



JHP is an award-winning architecture, planning and urban design firm practicing nationally from its base in Dallas, Texas. Founded in 1979 the firm's primary practice areas include such specialty markets as: Transit Oriented Development (TOD); Affordable Housing; High Density Infill Communities; Master Planning; Mixed-Use Developments; and Multifamily Housing. JHP is dedicated to providing high quality design solutions through analysis, thoughtful design and professional representation. The firm embraces the tenets of Whole Community Design™, which seeks to create memorable environments for people that are rich in diversity, unique to the place, and sustainable over time.

## Livable Communities Coalition (LCC)



Formed in 2005, LCC is the region's smart growth advocate and catalyst. It unites more than 50 organizations working to change the way metro Atlanta grows by focusing on land use, transportation, housing, and conservation of open space and natural resources. Members include regional leaders in the areas of aging, building and development, business, urban and landscape design, government, housing, planning, sustainable development, the environment, and transit and transportation alternatives.

## Planners and Engineers Collaborative, Inc.



Planners and Engineers Collaborative is a 48-year old firm providing professional consulting services in the areas of land surveying, site planning, civil engineering, green design, due diligence, construction layout, and landscape architecture for residential and commercial developments. Since 1963 Planners and Engineers Collaborative has adhered to the philosophy that these services are closely related and are more effectively coordinated when provided by a single firm. As the mission statement "We Provide Solutions" implies Planners & Engineers Collaborative will work to create innovative design and engineering solutions being mindful of cost effectiveness and energy conservation.

## Mayson Avenue Cooperative

The Mayson Avenue Cooperative was created by The Zeist Foundation to gauge the needs of the residents in the Edgewood neighborhood. By fostering relationships with the residents and discussing their priorities it was clear that affordable housing as part of a safe, family oriented neighborhood was essential. In 2003, a Community Liaison for Mayson Avenue Cooperative was hired, and building relationships with the Edgewood residents became a priority.

## Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority is the rapid-transit system in the Atlanta metropolitan area. MARTA operates a network of bus routes linked to a rapid transit system consisting of 48 miles of rail track with 38 train stations. MARTA operates almost exclusively in Fulton and DeKalb counties, with the exception of bus service to two destinations in Cobb County (Six Flags Over Georgia and the Cumberland Transfer Center next to the Cumberland Mall) and a single rail station in Clayton County at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. MARTA's mission is to strengthen communities, advance economic competitiveness, and respect the environment by providing a safe and

customer-focused regional transit system.



### **National Association of REALTORS®**

The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® founded 1908 as the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges, strives to be the collective force influencing and shaping the real estate industry. It seeks to be the leading advocate of the right to own, use, and transfer real property; the acknowledged leader in developing standards for efficient, effective, and ethical real estate business practices; and valued by highly skilled real estate professionals and viewed by them as crucial to their success.



### **PlaceMakers**

PlaceMakers is an international firm specializing in master planning, coding, communications and implementation. In the past eight years, PlaceMakers has written 35 codes in 12 U.S. states and 2 Canadian provinces, and has designed numerous private plans under adopted municipal form-based codes. Through its on-site and web-based seminars, the firm has trained more than 2,000 professionals in coding approaches that guide development and redevelopment in ways that enable mixed-use community with expanded transportation alternatives. PlaceMakers Canada, Inc. and PlaceMakers, LLC are seamlessly integrated, each positioned to serve Canadian and US governments and developers in collaborative, charrette-based placemaking efforts.

### **Southface**



Since 1978, Southface has promoted sustainable homes, workplaces and communities through education, research, advocacy and technical assistance in the Atlanta region. Southface programs reach over 40,000 people annually, primarily through trainings and specific project work. The current 70-member staff is divided into four major program areas: Residential

Green Building Services, Commercial Green Building Services, Sustainable Communities, and Energy and Sustainable Development Policy.

### **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthy Community Design Initiative (CDC)**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) supports public health efforts to design and build active communities that make it easier for people to live healthy lives. Staff from the CDC's Healthy Community Design Initiative participated as an integral part of the charrette team. The Initiative works to improve public health by: linking public health surveillance with community design decisions; improving community design decisions through tools such as Health Impact Assessment; educating decision makers on the health impact of community design; building partnerships with community design decision makers and their influencers; conducting research to identify the links between health and community design; and translating research into best practices.



### **The Home Depot Foundation**

The Home Depot Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that was established in 2002 to further the community building goals of The Home Depot by providing additional resources to assist nonprofit organizations. The mission of The Home Depot Foundation is simple...to improve homes and improve lives. Through partnership with local nonprofits and the volunteer efforts of Team Depot, they focus on repairing and refurbishing homes and facilities that serve disadvantaged families and individuals. For the next three years, the Foundation is placing special emphasis on serving U.S. military veterans who are facing growing financial and physical hardships at home as they return to civilian life.

Over the next three years (2011 – 2013), they will invest over \$30 million to help ease the burdens of this group by repairing and renovating homes for military veterans.



## Sustainable Communities Focus

In 2010 a consortium of regional organizations led by Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) submitted a grant application request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The grant was designed to support metropolitan and multijurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of: (1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; (2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; (3) energy use and climate change; and (4) public health and environmental impact.

Unfortunately the HUD application was not funded in the 2010 grant round. In January 2011, ARC notified HUD that the Atlanta consortium (Southface, LCC, ANDP, Georgia Organics, ARC, MARTA, Neighborhood Nexus and Civic League) wanted to accept regional “Preferred Sustainability Status” (PSS) due to receiving a qualifying application score.

Even without being funded, the basic elements of the HUD application served as a strong framework for transit oriented development (TOD) with local governments in the Atlanta region, and for several months since the HUD application submittal consortium partners have discussed how to continue the work that was sought under the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant.

Therefore, to pursue the work of the Atlanta consortium and in support of ARC’s and MARTA’s overall transit oriented development (TOD) work program, the consortium partners moved ahead with primary assistance from The Home Depot Foundation and other support from the National Board of REALTORS® Smart Growth Council to undertake work that was originally outlined in the City of Atlanta’s Edgewood/Candler Avenue MARTA station application that was included in the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning application. This area was deemed by the consortium members to be the best location for advancing the principles of the HUD application based on the considerable planning progress in the neighborhood by the City of Atlanta, Zeist Foundation and the Edgewood Community.



## Edgewood Neighborhood

### Location

The Edgewood community is located in the southeast quadrant of the City of Atlanta, in DeKalb County just west of the City of Decatur. The Study Area is in Atlanta Council District 5 and Neighborhood Planning Unit O. The Moreland Avenue corridor forms the western boundary of the neighborhood and it is one of the major north-south arterials of the City of Atlanta. Memorial Drive, also an arterial, runs through the southern portion of the neighborhood and this roadway serves as one of the primary connections between Decatur and Atlanta. Hosea Williams Drive serves as the central east-west spine of the neighborhood and provides connection to the other neighborhoods of NPU-O - Kirkwood and East Lake.

The northern edge of the neighborhood is the home to the Edgewood side of the Candler Park/ Edgewood MARTA station. The Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station is located along the Blue Line in the eastern portion of the City of Atlanta, in DeKalb County. The Candler Park Neighborhood is to the north of the station, while the Edgewood Neighborhood is to the south. DeKalb Avenue, the MARTA Rail line and the CSX Heavy Rail line bisect the station and divide the neighborhoods.

The majority of the Edgewood neighborhood is a stable single-family network of lots and homes. Portions of the community are dedicated to multi-family housing but the vast majority of the neighborhood is made up of detached single-family bungalow homes. A portion of the neighborhood in the northeast section is dedicated to industrial and live/work uses as well as a major regional soccer field. The Edgewood Retail district is located on Moreland, between Hardee and the rail lines.

### History

Both the Edgewood and Candler Park neighborhoods were originally founded as Edgewood, one of Atlanta's first suburbs. Many neighborhoods like Edgewood sprung up along the Georgia Railroad line from Decatur to Atlanta. By the early 1900s, Edgewood and its surrounding neighborhoods were all active communities with trolley lines connecting these neighborhoods to Atlanta and Decatur. In the early 1960s the interstate system was built just south of the Edgewood neighborhood providing significant transportation infrastructure but also severing the Edgewood neighborhood from East Atlanta and the other neighborhoods to the south.

The Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station opened in 1979. Access to the station is provided by DeKalb Avenue, LaFrance Street, and Oakdale Rd.





The initial community inventory



## Transit Oriented Development in Edgewood - Why Now?

There are many benefits to a well planned Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Where land use patterns contain a mixture of land uses, comfortable and safe pedestrian environments, and properly placed buildings and improvements, transit ridership tends to increase and automobile congestion decreases. For users, a transit-supportive environment improves the ease and efficiency with which the transit system can be accessed. For neighborhood residents, a well-organized land use plan that seamlessly integrates a new development into the existing community increases predictability for new development and achieves a development that can bolster property values and provide an asset not recognized before the process began.

For all users, a successful TOD can increase public safety by adding more “eyes on the street”. The access to so many amenities in just a few short blocks can significantly increase a household’s disposable income by eliminating the need for a first or second car. In addition, TODs can play an important role in economic development, as this development pattern is being demanded by more and more urban markets, and TODs are increasingly being used as a tool to help revitalize aging downtowns, declining urban neighborhoods or underutilized land, and to enhance tax revenues for local jurisdictions.

Over the course of the decade, the Edgewood neighborhood has been involved in several community planning processes, each drilling down to a deeper level, and each recognizing a greater level of progress and implementation. For the Edgewood and Candler Park community specifically, this TOD charrette represents an opportunity to move previous planning processes further towards fruition.

The 2011 Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) serves as the comprehensive plan for the City of Atlanta. The Short Term Work Program (STWP) of Community Assessment of

this document includes projects for each NPU of the City, including NPU-O of which the Edgewood neighborhood is a part of. The Ponce-Moreland Livable Centers Initiative study took a comprehensive look at the Ponce de Leon Avenue and Moreland Avenue corridors, and recommended improvements for the areas around the Edgewood/Candler Park and Inman Park/ Reynoldstown MARTA stations. The Edgewood Redevelopment Plan, a City adopted OCGA – 3661 Redevelopment Plan, followed the LCI study, and served as the first planning document that solely considered redevelopment opportunities in the Edgewood neighborhood.

The Edgewood charrette was designed to consider and honor the recommendations and findings from all of these past documents, and augment these completed processes by drilling down a step further to formulate an actual concept design for the underutilized parking lot on the south side of the Edgewood/Candler Park MARTA station.

## Moreland Avenue LCI

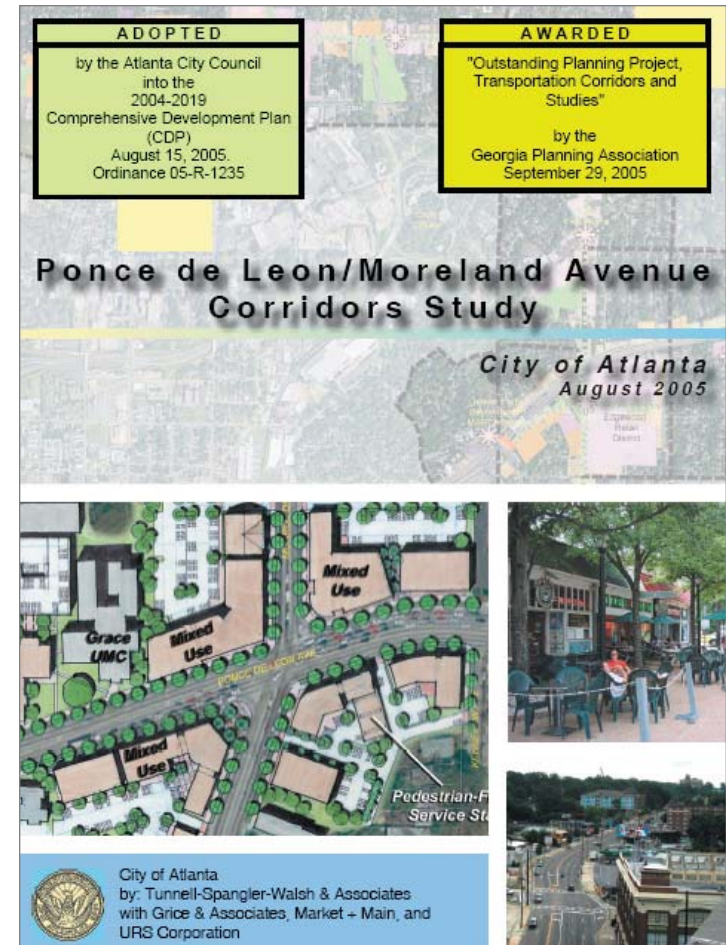
Completed and adopted into the Atlanta CDP August, 2005.

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) is an ARC managed program that awards planning grants on a competitive basis to local governments and nonprofit organizations to prepare plans for the enhancement of existing centers and corridors consistent with regional development policies. Once the plan is adopted, the LCI area is eligible to receive additional implementation funding.

The Moreland Avenue LCI was originally conducted as a joint-corridor planning study with Ponce de Leon Avenue by the City of Atlanta and was approved by the City in 2005. It has were specific Land Use recommendations for the Moreland Avenue corridor. In order to be eligible for future LCI implementation funding, the study was grandfathered-in as a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) study by the Atlanta Regional Commission in 2007.

### Plan Recommendations for Station Site

The Moreland Avenue Corridor Study took a comprehensive and inclusive examination of Moreland Avenue and the areas around the Edgewood/Candler Park and Inman Park/Reynoldstown MARTA stations. The land use plan developed for the Moreland Avenue LCI study area calls for developing higher density housing near these MARTA stations, and specifically reinforcing mixed-use nodes at the south side of the Edgewood/ Candler Park station. The recommendations support a 4 to 6 story or 80 feet high multifamily area on the south side of the Edgewood/Candler Park station, and a 2 to 3 story, neighborhood-scale residential uses on the north side of the Edgewood/Candler Park station, with up to 6 stories fronting DeKalb Avenue.





## Edgewood Redevelopment Plan

*Adopted July, 2009*

While there have been a series of planning and community development initiatives undertaken over the past 10 years that have provided a vision and structure for positive growth for the Edgewood neighborhood and its larger community, no plan focused solely on the Edgewood neighborhood and the infrastructure of specifically the neighborhood like the Edgewood Redevelopment Plan did.

The Edgewood Redevelopment Plan, completed in 2009, was a collaborative planning process including the City of Atlanta, MARTA, Atlanta Public Schools, the Organized Neighbors of Edgewood (ONE), Kirkwood Neighbor's Organization (KNO),

NPU-O and the Zeist Foundation. The plan is the result of extensive public involvement within the community and serves as a blueprint for future urban design, open space, connectivity, land use and zoning initiatives within the community.

An Advisory Committee of neighborhood leaders, City of Atlanta staff and representatives, residents, local institutions, developers, MARTA and school officials ushered this plan through a 6-month process. An extensive public participation process provided valuable input from several oft-ignored segments of community including affordable housing residents, elementary school students and middle school students. The highlight of the planning process was the community workshop that brought

together approximately 100 community members for an active day of planning, dreaming and visioning.

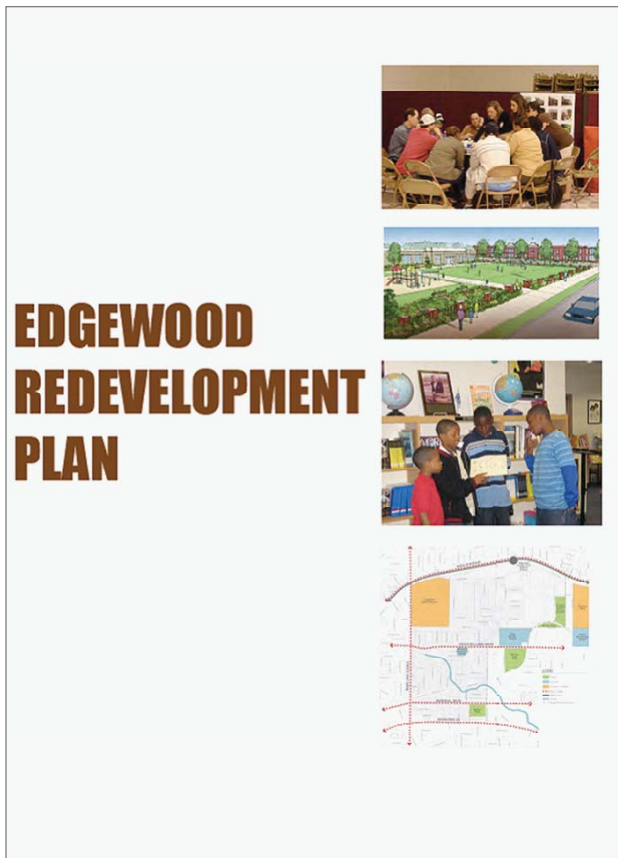
### Plan Recommendations for Station Site

The opportunity identified at the Edgewood/Candler Park MARTA station in the southern parking lot is for medium-scale mixed use development of four to five story buildings. It was concluded that multi-family development makes the most sense on the site; its proximity to the MARTA station, the large-scale retail already close-by (the Edgewood Retail District), and the size of the site itself (approximately seven acres) are all locational assets for multi-family housing. Based on market support and the size of the site, the Edgewood Redevelopment Plan recommended 250 to 300 multi-family units.

While the bulk of the site would make the most sense as multi-family development, the community and planning team felt that some accessory commercial use would be an asset and could be supported by the neighborhood. Based on market support and potential development characteristics, the Redevelopment Plan found that 12,000 to 18,000 square feet of retail/office space could work at this site.

### Specific Housing Recommendations per Plan

It is important to note that the community placed a lot of emphasis on affordable, diverse, lifecycle and accessible housing during the Redevelopment planning process. The Edgewood residents indicated very strongly throughout the entire study process that there is a value in ensuring that the Edgewood neighborhood remains affordable. Edgewood residents are proud that they currently represent a great degree of diversity and their chief desire is to preserve this. The inclusion of this affordability component was of particular importance to the charrette team throughout the planning process.





## MARTA TOD GUIDELINES

In 2010, MARTA officially adopted Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines. These TOD Guidelines are meant to provide the entire community of TOD stakeholders with a common vocabulary and frame of reference. For MARTA itself, these Guidelines were created to:

- help guide its role as a TOD sponsor for joint development built on MARTA property or connected physically or functionally to MARTA stations;
- help guide TOD stakeholders - for any development that occurs within the “zone of influence” of current or future stations (roughly a half-mile around rail stations and a quarter-mile around local streetcar and bus stops); and
- help guide TOD advocates - for sustainable land use decisions along all of Metro Atlanta’s transit corridors.

MARTA staff was heavily involved throughout the charrette planning process, both during the planning leading up to the four day charrette and during the actual charrette itself. The Edgewood/Candler Park MARTA Station planning charrette served as an opportunity for MARTA to “test” their newly adopted TOD policies against a station area planning process. All resulting charrette products were repeatedly “vetted” against the TOD Guidelines to ensure compliance.

These Guidelines are built around four core principles of TOD:

**1. Station-area development that is compact and dense relative to its surroundings.** Compared to its surroundings, TOD seeks greater density for a simple reason—so that more people can live, work, shop, or go to school within walking distance of the station. In so doing, they not only generate revenue for MARTA and other transit providers; they also drive less, use less gasoline, and save money.

**2. A rich mix of land uses.** TOD is often referred to as “place-making” or the creation of “transit villages”—livable places where the clustering of uses allows people to do what they need and want to do—live, work, shop, obtain services, go to school, use the library, have fun—more conveniently. The full menu of activities need not be found at every station. But a lively mix of uses strengthens the link between transit and development and allows transit to function more cost-effectively.

**3. A great public realm.** Transit-oriented development is pedestrian-oriented development, especially within the quarter-mile radius that most people will walk as part of a daily commute. In a TOD environment, a grid of small, navigable blocks has sidewalks throughout, with attractive amenities, lighting, and way-finding. The streets, sidewalks, plazas, and stations are safe, active, and accessible. There are no blank walls, and at street level there are shops, restaurants, and other active uses that bring the public realm indoors.

**4. A new approach to parking** Parking is shared as much as possible, taking advantage of dove-tailing uses and reducing the actual number of spaces provided. The parking which is required is designed so as not to dominate the visual or pedestrian environment. TOD does not mean “no cars”. Even with high transit utilization, many people will come and go by automobile and need a place to park. But a defining characteristic of TOD is that it requires less parking than similar development in non-transit locations.

Specifically, some of the TOD Guidelines that were given considerable attention throughout the charrette design process are listed below.

### **Affordable Housing**

MARTA believes that on average at least 20% of the units in residential or mixed-use TOD projects should be affordable to workforce households, seniors with low, moderate, or fixed incomes, and persons with disabilities. MARTA recognizes that delivering affordable housing as part of TOD will

require a collaborative effort among multiple stakeholders - the municipal and county zoning jurisdictions in the MARTA service area, their housing authorities, the state of Georgia, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, for-profit and non-profit developers, lenders, community groups, and MARTA itself. This collaborative effort was an important component that was crucial in coming together around the Edgewood Station site.

### ***Neighborhood Station Guidelines***

The Edgewood/Candler Park station is considered a neighborhood station under MARTA TOD Guidelines. Under MARTA Guidelines, neighborhood stations are “line stops”—local stations where most people arrive on foot. Neighborhood rail stations attract passengers from a large residential “walk shed” and are fed by bus routes operating on nearby streets. MARTA Guidelines also state that neighborhood stations should have little or no park-and-ride. Neighborhood streetcar or bus stops are more closely spaced along a linear corridor and draw their passengers from a closer radius.

The ideal land use mix for neighborhood stations, according to MARTA Guidelines: Multi-family residential and/or neighborhood scale mixed-use with retail, restaurant, and service-oriented offices, transitioning to lower density single- or multi-family away from the “main street”.



The Decatur MARTA Station received LCI funding to renovate the station.



Townhomes were developed on surplus MARTA parking at the Chamblee Station.



## Current Conditions

### I. Neighborhood Demographics

According to the 2010 Census block group data, block groups that are within a ½ mile of the Edgewood Station have:

- 3,384 Housing Units
- 274 Vacant Units
- 6,380 Total Population

A market study conducted by Columbia Residential for a multi-family project in the neighborhood found there is market demand for multifamily residential within this area. The *Edgewood Redevelopment Plan*, completed in July 2009, also recommends medium scale multifamily development, based on market support and the size of the site.

### II. Land Use

The charrette planning process focused on the MARTA owned parking lots located on the south side of the Edgewood/ Candler Park station. The Edgewood Station is currently zoned I-1 (Industrial) and C-1 (Commercial). This includes a 318 space parking lot east of the south bus entrance in Edgewood and 145 spaces west of the south bus entrance in Edgewood. Immediately north of the MARTA station is Iverson Park, however there is no direct access to the station from the park. Currently the station parking area is fenced with some pedestrian access.



Sidewalk access to the station is currently blocked by a fence.



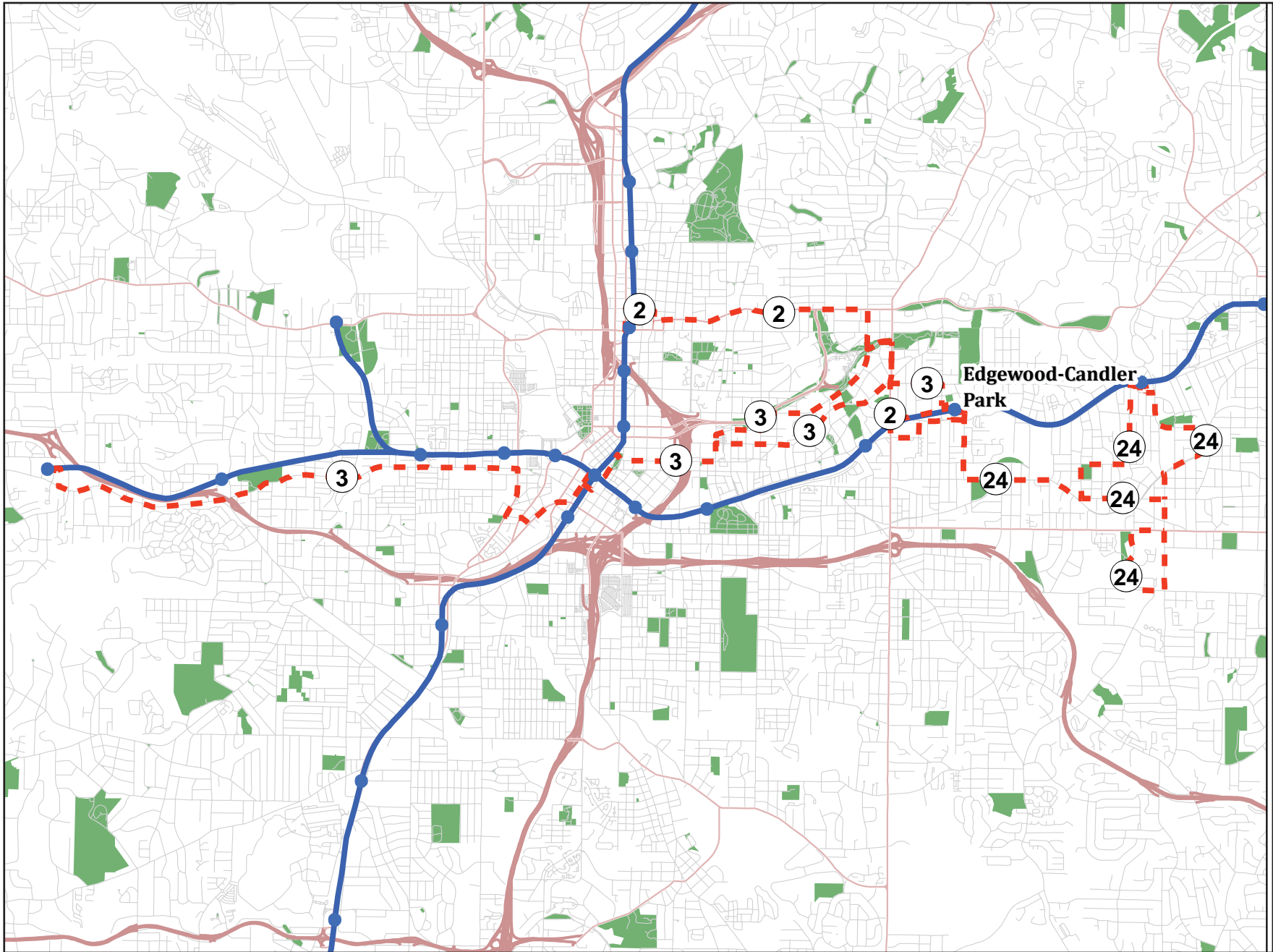
Southern Parking Lot at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station

Directly west of the Edgewood side of the MARTA Station property is an older apartment complex and directly east of the property is the Schwan's Food Bakery. The bakery property will not experience a land use transition in the foreseeable future, as interviews with the bakery's manager reinforced a solid, well performing business that is satisfied with its current location in the Edgewood Community and has no plans of relocating.

The Edgewood neighborhood is a typical intown single-family bungalow community for Atlanta with older homes predominantly from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. As such, the majority of the Land Use and Zoning of the neighborhood reflects this single-family character. During the last 5-10 years there has been a noticeable increase in larger-sized "infill" development with single-family homes seeking variances to maximize their ability to build larger homes than traditionally were built in the neighborhood. The most recent improvement is the development of the former Atlanta Gas Light site into the Edgewood Retail District.



Aerial Image of the Study Area, 2010



Current MARTA bus service route to the Edgewood-Candler Park Station

### III. Transit

The Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station is classified by MARTA as a neighborhood station along the Blue (East-West) Line, three stations to the east of the hub at Five Points. The station is bisected by an active CSX rail line and there is a single shared platform with split access points on either side of the railway and DeKalb Avenue. The station currently has two bike racks, each with 9 spaces both north and south of the station.

#### Station Users

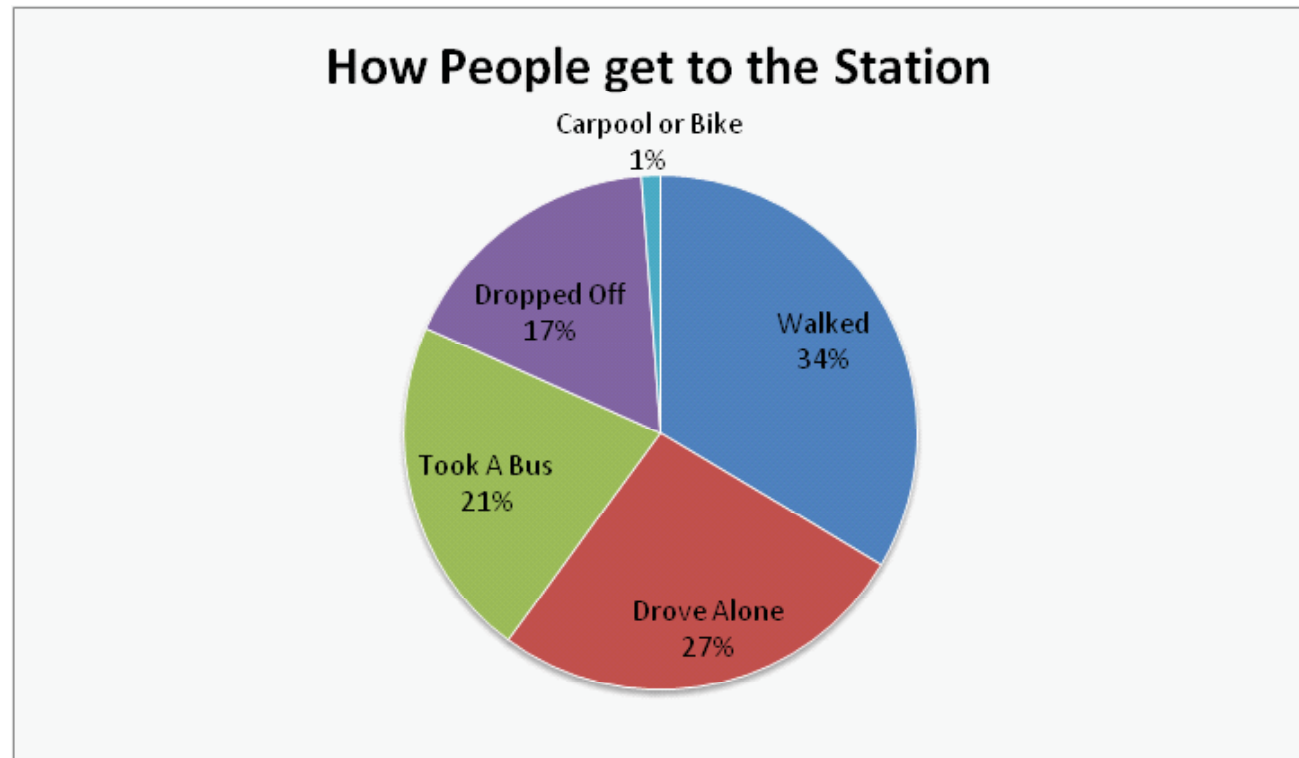
The station averages approximately 1,200-1,400 riders every weekday with significant reductions during the weekends. During the weekday, the highest number of boarding occurs between 6 and 9 am. Compared to other stations within the MARTA system, the Edgewood-Candler

Park Station has the second lowest daily ridership, ranking the station number 37 out of 38 in terms of total ridership. In addition to the rail station, there are several bus routes that cross through the neighborhood providing vital transit options for the community.

The three bus routes that serve Edgewood Candler Park:

- Route 2 Ponce de Leon Ave./Moreland Ave
- Route 3 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr./Auburn Ave
- Route 24 East Lake/Hosea Williams

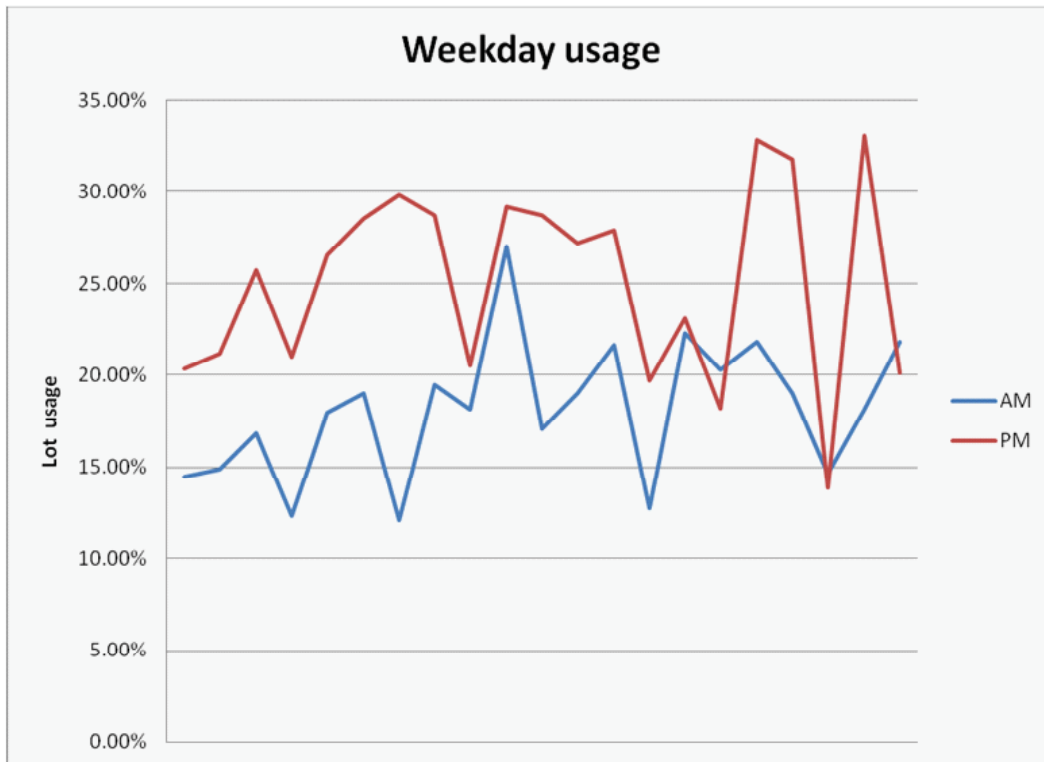
In 2010, ARC released its *Transit On-Board Ridership Survey*. The survey interviewed riders of all transit systems in the region and allows for detailed information about specific bus routes and stations. The chart below details how the users of the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station arrived at the station.



### Parking at the Station

The Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station currently has 679 parking spaces split among 3 lots: 216 spaces in the northern lot in Candler Park, a 318 space lot east of the south bus entrance in Edgewood and 145 spaces west of the south bus entrance in Edgewood. Currently the 145 spaces in the west lot are not in daily use.

In 2008, the Zeist Foundation, who has been heavily invested in the Edgewood neighborhood since the 1990's, commissioned a parking study of the parking lots on the Edgewood side to examine the feasibility of a TOD development on the south parking lots.



As the chart demonstrates, the parking lots were never filled to more than 35 percent of their capacity. The highest recorded number of cars at one time was 153.

### IV. Pedestrian & Bicycle Circulation

The current state of connectivity from the neighborhood into the MARTA station for pedestrians and bicycles is poor and does not encourage non-vehicular transit to the station. In much of the neighborhood, sidewalks are non-existent or in extremely deteriorated condition. Broken sidewalks, gaps in the sidewalks and buckled pavement are common on many streets. Bike lanes exist currently for a portion of Hosea Williams Drive on the eastern edge of the neighborhood.



Bicycle Facilities in the MARTA Parking Lot





## The Process

The Edgewood MARTA station Transit-Oriented Development Plan grew out of a public, four day charrette held from April 13th through April 16th of 2011. A charrette is an intensive planning session where citizens, designers, stakeholder and others collaborate on a community vision or a specific vision for a development. Charrettes are organized to encourage the participation and ideas of all involved, and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers. More importantly, it allows everyone who participates to be a mutual author of the plan.

The charrette team worked out of a studio located at the Columbia Senior Residences, located in the Edgewood community and within walking distance of the Edgewood/Candler Park MARTA station. This studio was open to the general public throughout the four days, and community members were encouraged to drop by at any time to talk about the process and their ideas for the site. The entire charrette team consisted of members of the Southface Staff (Christina Corley served as the project manager, Gray Kelly, Robert Reed, Keith Holser, Eli Tedesco), staff from the Atlanta Regional Commission's Land Use Division (Dan Reuter, Jared Lombard, Beth Hawes), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy Community Design Initiative (Charles Green, Dee Merriam, Katherine Hebert) MARTA staff (John Crocker, Ted Tarantino, Connie Johnson, Jason Ward), Columbia Residential (Jake Von Trapp), Livable Communities Coalition (John Maximuk), the Atlanta Board of REALTORS® (Robert Broom), JHP Architecture/Urban Design (Ron Harwick, Brian Keith), Greenrock Partnership (Jay Scott), the National Charrette Institute (Bill Lennertz) and the National Association of REALTORS® (Darren Smith and Hugh Morris), Georgia Institute of Technology School of Architecture (Ellen Dunham-Jones) and City of Atlanta Department of Planning and Community Development staff (Jonathan Lewis, Karl Smith-Davids and Jessica Lavandier)

A pre-charrette design assessment was produced by a working group prior to the charrette. With key design

principles in mind, the working group looked for elements of at TOD plan that would fit with the existing neighborhood fabric. Findings from the assessment were provided to the charrette team, and the charrette began with a walking tour of the site.

The Pre-Charrette Assessment is found in Appendix C.



Neighborhood Walking Tour

The first day continued with a series of technical meetings and stakeholder meetings. Some of the key guiding principles established during these meetings and carried through the charrette process and subsequent site concept designs were:

- MARTA Bus operations should remain unchanged in any resulting concepts for the site,
- MARTA will allow the number of MARTA owned parking spaces dedicated to MARTA station patrons to be reduced to 150-200 spaces,
- Parking for MARTA patrons should be incorporated in one MARTA parking structure,
- Make the station a destination,
- Allow for easy access to the station from all sides of the site,



Technical meetings involved a variety of stakeholders and experts.

- Add significant greenspace for the community, and
- Ensure that the site has a civic component.

The first night of the charrette, the charrette team hosted a public kick-off meeting at the Coan Recreation Center. This meeting introduced attendees to the charrette team and the process, and involved an interactive exercise during which the charrette team assisted the meeting participants in exploring options for redevelopment on the south parking lot.

This meeting offered an initial opportunity for the community to give the design team their thoughts of the future of the



The Design Team presented early concepts to the stakeholders.

Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station. The major takeaways heard throughout the meeting included:

- All attendees felt it was important that any new development integrate usable greenspace and safe multi-use space within the development in a manner that is accessible to the larger Edgewood and Candler Park neighborhood.
- Maintaining the on-street parking within the neighborhood was very important to all the residents, as many of the existing homes in the Edgewood neighborhood do not have dedicated driveways or garages. Residents and the charrette team discussed the importance of developing a parking strategy to protect the on-street parking for Edgewood residents, when development does occur on the south parking lot.
- Attendees expressed a desire and interest in outdoor dining spaces being incorporated into new retail uses on the site.
- Any new development on the site should include civic and/or community creative space that is accessible to Edgewood and Candler Park residents.
- Attendees expressed a strong desire to see the station be developed as a destination for the neighborhood and MARTA patrons.
- Residents felt that over the years the station has become an island unto itself in the community, and hoped that any new development can help to reorient and integrate the MARTA station seamlessly into the community.
- One way attendees felt the station area could achieve this seamless integration was with the continuation of

the existing street grid network already present in the community into the station area when development occurs. Specifically, most tables expressed the desire to see Lowery and Hutchinson Streets extended onto the site.

Over the next two days the charrette team continued to hold technical stakeholder meetings to better inform the design team and the final concepts. Feedback loops were also held, during which the design team presented their initial concepts and ideas to the entire charrette team for feedback and critique. The charrette culminated at the end of the four days with a final public meeting held at the Coan Recreation Center, during which the concepts for the site were presented to the public for input and feedback.



The studio was open to the public throughout the day.

## Initial Design Concepts

Using the ideas and visions heard at the public kick-off meeting, and considering the needs and desires heard of the various stakeholder groups, the design team developed some initial early sketches illustrating these potential visions for the site. A mid course review was held with the charrette team. At the mid course review, the design team presented these early concepts to various stakeholders, the charrette team, and some members of the public who were present within the studio.

Three main concepts were shown. All contained similar elements but each had distinct features and design.

### Concept One – Central Commons

The first concept was centered with a Central Commons theme. This concept later called, “Central Commons” provided a main park centrally located within the parking lot terminating at the station entrance. Development would be located along each side, screening parking lots. The actual station itself would be transformed with a clock tower, making it a focal point within the development. The MARTA Station Parking would be within garages on both sides, with retail, and civic space in the ground floor of each development.

### Concept Two – Pocket Parks

The second concept was centered along Pocket Parks within the development. This concept later called “Pocket Park” still contained a central Greenspace but also had smaller pocket parks with the development. The Pocket Park concept also contained two parking garages but unlike the Central Commons, it shifted parking over the bus stations, creating a covered bus parking garage.

### Concept Three – Main Street

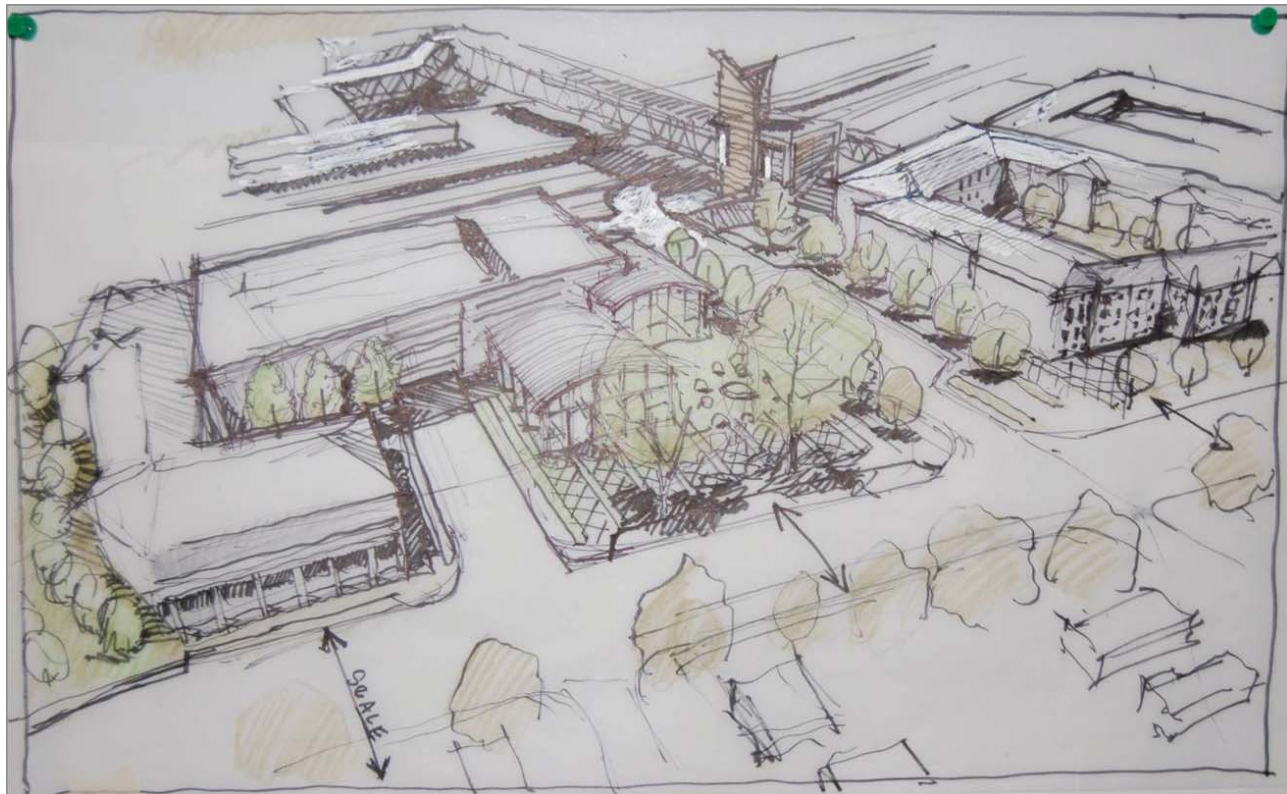
The third concept was centered on creating a Main Street within the site and placing greenspace along Whitefoord Avenue. The Main Street concept, had less greenspace within the site, but contained more hardscaped plazas within the development.

### Mid-course Review Feedback

After three concept plans were developed, technical MARTA staff, design team members, and the full charrette team examined and discussed the options and decided on which elements of each site plan were favored over others. During the review, it was also decided that the final concepts would

strive to allow MARTA bus operations within the development to remain unchanged in order to comply with MARTA's needs. In addition, MARTA police expressed a desire to maintain all parking dedicated to MARTA riders in one location on the site in order to facilitate and improve safety, security, and enforcement of the site. By allowing parking in multiple locations, that limits the deterrence of a visible MARTA police officer.

At the end of the mid-course review, it was decided that two concepts would be further developed, integrating preferred elements from all three concept plan options. The two plans would be developed further to provide the public with options and keep the site plan flexible for more input from MARTA and the neighborhood. The two selected were: The Pocket Park and The Central Commons.



One of the Early Concepts



## Tour of the Final Plans

The design team developed two visions for the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA station south parking lot. While both plans are unique, both also have similar features and concepts. Both plans include mixed-use developments that contain greenspace and maintain the current MARTA bus operations as is. In addition both plans extend Lowery and Hutchinson Streets into the development. Additional street connections are recommended.

## Pocket Parks Concept

The Pocket Parks concepts contain two 4-5 story mixed use buildings that are built around two separate parking garages. The project maintains the existing MARTA tower and escalators, but it develops covered MARTA bus bays under the eastern parking garage. The design maintains its focus on the concept of pocket parks, with a splash fountain park at the corner of Whitefoord Avenue and LaFrance Street, a “Community Living Room” park between the extensions of Hutchinson and Lowery and greenspace along the street frontage. A key component of this site is the development of a transit plaza where civic space and retail would be located.

The detailed development specifications for the Pocket Parks concept are as follows:

- Western side of the development (Whitefoord Avenue)
  - 141 units
  - 11,000 square feet of retail
  - 3,600 square feet of leasing office
  - 5 story buildings
  - 3 level garage with 228 parking spaces
    - 50 spaces of retail parking
    - 145 spaces of residential parking

- Eastern side of the development (Mayson Avenue)
  - 146 units
  - 5,600 square feet of retail
  - 3,600 square feet of leasing office
  - 5 story buildings
  - 4 level garage with 336 parking spaces
    - 160 MARTA dedicated spaces
    - 28 spaces of retail parking
    - 146 spaces of residential parking
- Total Development
  - 315 units
  - 16,600 square feet of retail
  - Two (2) 3,600 square feet of leasing offices
  - Two Parking garages (total 564 spaces in garages)



Existing Covered MARTA Bus Operation

# Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station Charrette



GREEN POCKETS SCHEME

The Pocket Parks Site Plan



0 50 100 200 Feet Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, City of Atlanta, & MARTA



The Pocket Parks Design Plan

## Central Commons Concept

The Central Commons concept contains three 4-5 story mixed use buildings that contains one main parking garage and a smaller below grade podium garage that is covered by a residential courtyard. The centerpiece of the development is a central community commons and an iconic MARTA tower built onto the existing MARTA tower and escalator. This tower provides a key focal point into the development. The Central Commons concept contains a smaller transit plaza than the Pocket Parks scheme and maintains the current MARTA bus loading area. The Central Commons concept has garage access from Whitefoord Avenue. City of Atlanta recommends extending Amanda Street along the rail line and intersecting with Whitefoord.

The detailed development specifications for the Central Commons concept are as follows:

- West side (Whitefoord Avenue)
  - 104 units
  - 8 live work units
  - 4,800 square feet of café/market space
  - 3,600 square feet of leasing office
  - 4 story buildings
  - Total 84 parking spaces
    - 58 spaces in a 1 level below grade podium garage
    - 16 spaces atop at grade spaces and 10 on street spaces
    - 32 spaces of retail parking
    - 56 spaces of residential parking
- East side (Mayson Avenue)
  - 177 units

- 5,100 square feet of civic and retail space
- 2,100 square feet of leasing office
- 12 live work units
- 4-5 story buildings
- 4 and ½ level garage with 360 parking spaces
  - 160 MARTA dedicated spaces
  - 25 spaces of retail parking
  - 177 spaces of residential parking
- Total Development
  - 281 units
  - 20 live/work units 9,900 square feet of retail
  - Total of 5,700 square feet of leasing offices in two offices
  - One parking garage + 1 podium level (total 418 spaces in garages).



The Site Looking from the Intersection of Whitefoord Avenue and LaFrance Street



# Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station Charrette



CENTRAL COMMONS SCHEME

The Central Commons Site Plan



Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, City of Atlanta, & MARTA



**JHP**  
Architecture Urban Design

The Central Commons Design Plan



The MARTA Station and Plaza Re-envisioned



The View of the Intersection of LaFrance Street and Whiteford Avenue



## Transportation Enhancements

Throughout the charrette, the charrette team walked the neighborhoods surrounding the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA station to examine the transportation infrastructure needs to support a TOD development at the station. The charrette team has identified key infrastructure improvements that are necessary to aid in the success of a TOD development at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station.

Currently some, but not all, neighborhood streets in the



Example of Sidewalk Quality

Edgewood community have sidewalks. While most of the main streets within the neighborhoods do have sidewalks, the sidewalk quality is varied with missing or broken concrete. In some locations infill sidewalk construction is needed for either replacement or new gap construction. Whitefoord Avenue has sharrows, new sidewalks and on street parking that calms traffic.

The intersection of Marion Place and Caroline Street needs to be repaired and upgraded with curb and ramps on all sides of the intersection. Currently the intersection is falling into disrepair, with large areas of concrete missing.

A key component of a successful TOD at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station is improving Whitefoord Avenue, between LaFrance Street and DeKalb Avenue. Improvements recommended for this corridor include:

- Intersection improvements at DeKalb Avenue and Whitefoord Avenue. This may include installation of on-street parking, sidewalks and possibly median on Whitefoord Avenue. Further study is needed for this improvement, and it could be a model for other intersections along DeKalb Avenue;



A charrette team member examines the transportation infrastructure.

- Removal of the dedicated turn lane at LaFrance Street and Whitefoord Avenue; and
- Pedestrian scale lighting in the Whitefoord underpass. Currently the underpass lighting does not provide a safe feeling under the underpass. Additional lighting will provide a safer experience for pedestrian users of the underpass.

The development proposed at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station will require significant changes to LaFrance Street. LaFrance Street should be upgraded to meet the City of Atlanta Street Design Standards. These include wider sidewalks along the north side of the street, bulb outs for parking, pedestrian lighting, and improved pedestrian crossings to connect to the MARTA station. Street trees should be added within the buffer strip between the sidewalks and the street.



The Existing View of LaFrance Street

Currently LaFrance Street also has speed humps.



Future LaFrance Street Improvements

With wider sidewalks, and on-street parking proposed with the development, these should be removed. In addition, the speed humps are not preferred for MARTA bus routes due to the impact to the MARTA buses.

Within the neighborhood, sidewalks on Hutchinson, Lowery, Mayson, Mell, Iverson, and Oakdale streets should be provided along both sides of the street. At a minimum where gaps or deteriorated sidewalks exist, sidewalks should be repaired.

Just north of the MARTA Station is Iverson Park. Currently a metal fence separates the park from the station requiring users from the northeast and Candler Park to walk to Oakdale Road to access the station. A controlled gate should be installed to allow access to and from the park during park operating hours. This is a recommendation of not only the charrette team, but was also something heard from both the Edgewood and Candler Park community residents during the public meeting.



Iverson Park as Viewed from the MARTA Station



## Zoning and Smart Code

The Charrette Team wanted to draft a form based code for the station area plan that could test the ability to respond to the neighborhoods needs while accommodating the density required for MARTA ridership. To accomplish this, the design team developed a SmartCode and Regulating Plan for the Edgewood-Candler Park Station. Form Codes are a form of zoning that focus on form and design of structures rather than specific uses. These requirements will need to be codified for consistency with the City of Atlanta Zoning Resolution.

While the SmartCode and Regulating Plan produced at the charrette are in draft form, the code was found to be both flexible and predictable as a regulatory device. Of particular note is the ability to use the SmartCode on behalf of the existing Edgewood neighborhood parcels to the South. The majority of the residential area is currently zoned R-5, permitting single-family and duplex units. With a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet and a 30' front setback, a

significant number of houses in this neighborhood are non-conforming. This places a hardship on the homeowner, should the house be destroyed. The SmartCode has been customized to reflect the character of this historic residential area, and if used as their zoning designation would remove the variance requirement.

The MARTA property is T5, providing the appropriate transition to the neighborhood. The T5 zone is based upon the urban center portion of Glenwood Park. This permits heights to 120 feet, so it has the potential of meaningful TOD densities. To assure the neighborhood of civic space and build value to the buildings fronting onto the green, this area is coded as Civic Space. The Transect Zones used in the planning area include T3 and T5.



**T3**



### T3 - Sub-Urban

#### CoA Alternative - Traditional Neighborhood

This reflects the character of the historic residential neighborhood. It is a low to medium density walkable residential area adjacent to higher density areas with mixed use. Home occupations and outbuildings are allowed. Setbacks are typical of traditional neighborhoods. Blocks may be large and thoroughfares irregular to accommodate natural conditions, but are designed for slow movement. This category does not occur in the Edgewood MARTA plan, but may be used for the Edgewood neighborhood. Recommended zoning designations include single family R districts. Also appropriate is the multi-family MR (1 to 3) districts and a maximum height of 3 stories predominantly along La France in parcels with a Medium Density Land Use designation and small commercial nodes in the interior of the neighborhood.

**T5**



### T5 - Urban Center

#### CoA Alternative- Neighborhood Center

The TOD plan is in a Neighborhood Center. It consists of higher density mixed use buildings that accommodate retail, offices, and apartments along with civic buildings, square and plazas. It has a tight network of streets, with wide sidewalks, street tree planting and buildings set close to the sidewalks. Buildings are oriented to the street and define the street. Heights can be up to 6 stories. Recommended zoning designations include the MR and MRC districts..



## Green Building

One of the project goals is to certify green buildings and the community in order to become a regional example of a certified sustainable Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and adequately address the MARTA TOD guidelines. To meet this goal, the proposed project could consider pursuing the following green building/community certifications:

- LEED Neighborhood Development,
- EarthCraft Communities,
- LEED for Homes, and
- EarthCraft Multifamily.

At the charrette, green building consultants met with construction and design team members, reviewed early conceptual designs, surrounding neighborhood conditions, initial programming and density estimates. Initial scorecards were created for each program to identify site-related credits achievable by the project as a certified community or buildings within the project as certified buildings. All scorecards and the full Green Building Report is available as Appendix A. The following is a summary of the some options, pathways and/or strategies the project could pursue for specific credits or requirements.

## LEED ND Scoring Summary



Due to its location and the nature of good Transit Oriented Design, the project scores very well within the LEED ND program without having to stretch for points. Indeed, it is an excellent candidate for LEED ND certification. Notably, the project may have some challenges in the length of time it will take to certify the entire project. A good strategy for LEED ND certification is to select the first phase of the project, register and certify it as a LEED ND and continue to do the same with all other portions. This will require more officially certified structures within each

LEED ND site but helps achieve certification faster. Likewise, registering multiple LEED NDs may slightly alter some of the distance to mixed uses and other calculations.

To move forward with LEED ND scoring, the project should not use the optional SLL Prerequisite Review but should move to achieve Stage I certification which can assist in entitlement.

## EarthCraft Communities Scoring Summary



The project's location and program elements allow it to take advantage of several points within the Earth Craft Community Program (ECC) without much trouble. Some program elements that may be more difficult to achieve due to tight site are related to onsite stormwater treatment. A second challenge may be the phasing of the project. The ECC program requires completion of all development infrastructure prior to certification so it may be advantageous for the project to divide the site into smaller ECCs, register and certify each portion. Notably, if the project certifies separate, smaller ECCs, the same 100% green building requirement still applies and only some calculations from the site to mixed uses may change. Likewise, some points related to the mixture of housing types may be adjusted; depending on how the project is phased.

To move forward with ECC certification, the project must register the project prior to land disturbing activity.

## LEED Mid-rise Scoring Summary

Overall the project scored well within the first 4 sections of the LEED for Homes Mid-rise program due to good location, good conceptual site planning and an assumed level of performance by a potential project developer-Columbia Residential- on past LEED for Homes projects. The following sections were scored during the Charrette:

- Innovation & Design (ID),
- Location & Linkages (LL),



- Sustainable Sites (SS), and
- Water Efficiency (WE) – partially.

Notably, the project should employ many of the strategies used in past Columbia Residential green building projects as well as identify new credits to pursue that fit the needs and capacities of this particular site.

In order to move forward with LEED for Homes, the project must contact a LEED for Homes Provider. The Provider will help the Project start the process of registration, discuss how to categorize the different building types, and schedule the preliminary rating.

### EarthCraft Multifamily Scoring Summary

For the purposes of the Charrette exercise, the evaluation concentrated on identifying sustainability measures that are well suited for this site as well as those that may not have been included in similar residential projects.

To move forward with ECMF certification the development team should register the project at [www.earthcraft.org](http://www.earthcraft.org) and work with EarthCraft throughout the design process.

### Healthy Communities

- A key component of the charrette was to develop a healthy community. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) worked with the design team to assist incorporating Healthy Community Design elements into the design. The final designs were evaluated on the ability to:
  - Reduce risk of obesity, heart disease and hypertension by increasing opportunities for regular physical activity,
  - Reduce risk of asthma and other respiratory diseases from air pollution,

- Reduce air pollution and injuries from vehicle crashes,
- Increase social connection and sense of community,
- Provide multi-modal transportation options,
- Improve mental health,
- Make healthy food choices,
- Have a full range of housing options regardless of age, income or ability, and
- Mitigate adverse climate events.

The final design includes healthy community design elements that the community had suggested such as: an open space to increase social connection, a range of housing options regardless of income, ability and age; and the encouragement of physical activity through design via a grand outdoor staircase and tower leading up to the MARTA station as the design focal point.

### Implementation

The charrette is only the first step in developing a TOD development at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station. A successful development will only occur if the team members of the charrette work deliberately and cooperatively in pursuing development opportunities at the station. A detailed work program is included in Appendix B.

#### City of Atlanta

The City of Atlanta, as the local government, is responsible for approving any development on the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station parking lot. To develop the TOD vision established within the two concepts, the property needs to be rezoned. This legislative process may be done in advance of



a specific development proposal or when a development is finalized.

Each rezoning scenario has pros and cons. An advanced rezoning would allow MARTA and any potential developers a clear expectation of the City's vision of the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station, and it would allow a developer to access Low Income Housing Tax Credits quicker for construction. However, it may require variances or unforeseen difficulties for a developer to meet that vision.

A latter rezoning would allow the City of Atlanta to work with a developer to get the best possible outcome, however it may significantly lengthen the development process and construction and make it cumbersome to transfer the property from MARTA.

The City of Atlanta can construct the necessary infrastructure to support a TOD development at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station or it could be completed by the development team. Funding may be available through the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Program or other federal programs. For an LCI project to be eligible to compete for funding, the project must be identified in an adopted LCI plan. Therefore, in order to be eligible for LCI funding, the City of Atlanta needs to amend the Moreland LCI Study to include information about the transportation infrastructure projects that would compete for funding, and these changes must be approved and adopted by the City of Atlanta into the existing LCI plan and the Comprehensive Development plan.

The LCI program generally opens an application process for new transportation project funding yearly. Therefore, it is important that the City of Atlanta works to update the Moreland Avenue LCI Study to ensure the desired transportation projects are eligible to compete for LCI funding once ARC opens a funding round.

### **MARTA**

MARTA as the property owner has final control over the

disposition of the property. MARTA as a public transit agency has two options to develop a TOD at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station. In both options a ground lease could be used instead of a property sale. There are many different state and federal requirements about the sale or transfer of MARTA property for development that need to be followed.

- Option 1- MARTA can enter into a formal agreement with another public agency or authority that would sponsor development on the property. That agency/ authority would ultimately take title to the property and subsequently work with a developer(s) to develop the MARTA parking lot property into a TOD development.
- Option 2- MARTA issues a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station. Developers would respond to the RFP, and one proposal would be selected and negotiated. The RFP could require that the proposals be based on the vision established in this document, and one of the criterion for selecting a proposal could be how well it conforms to this plan.

### **The Developer**

The developer would be responsible for developing the property. The developer should be prepared to develop a target of 20% of the residential units in the development as affordable to workforce households, seniors with low, moderate, or fixed incomes, and persons with disabilities, per MARTA TOD Guideline specifications and per the desires of the Edgewood community to incorporate a mixed-income development on the station site.

If the developer seeks to use Low Income Housing Tax Credits for financing assistance it would require an application to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs at the earliest in 2012. At a minimum the development would take 2-3 years to complete including the time necessary to acquire the property from MARTA.

## Appendix A- Pre Charrette Design Assessment

### **Atlanta Regional Commission**

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) assists in the financing of transportation infrastructure and plans within its role as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Atlanta region. ARC may also provide technical assistance to MARTA and the City of Atlanta to assist them in the development of a TOD at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station upon their request to ARC.

Additionally, ARC manages the LCI program. The LCI program has implementation funds available for transportation projects identified in existing LCI studies. The Edgewood/Candler Park station is located in the Moreland LCI study boundary. Therefore, the station site would be eligible to compete for supplemental study funds and transportation implementation funds. However, a 20% local match is required for transportation projects, and these projects must be identified in the adopted LCI study to be eligible (refer to the City of Atlanta implementation section above for further discussion of steps necessary to make a project eligible for LCI funding). In addition, it should be noted that LCI funding is not guaranteed to any project and is provided on a competitive basis to existing LCI communities, of which there are currently more than 100. Currently, the cap a single project can receive in LCI implementation assistance is \$4,000,000.

### **Southface**

Southface can assist MARTA, the City of Atlanta and the developer in designing and constructing a green development at the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station. The developer should decide which programs and building types it wishes to certify and continue working with Southface to properly design, construct and certify the structures.

**EDGEWOOD- CANDLER PARK IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

| Transportation Projects   |  |                     |                   |                    |                                    |
|---|--|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Location  | Description  | Type of Improvement | Construction Year | Construction Costs | Responsible Party                  |
| Caroline and Marion Place Intersection  | Installation of curbs, ADA ramps and repaving  | Repair              | 2011              | \$45,000           | City of Atlanta                    |
| Edgewood Neighborhood streets: Hutchinson, Lowery, Mayson, Mell, Iverson, and Oakdale | Sidewalk repair on neighborhood streets  | Repair              | 2012              | 100 per foot       | City of Atlanta                    |
| Whitefoord Avenue between La France and DeKalb Avenue                                 | Intersection Improvements at Dekalb Ave to include removal of dedicated turn lane at La France, installation of pedestrian scaled lighting, installation of lighting in underpass, on street parking, sidewalks, median. | Intersection        | 2012              | \$900,000          | City of Atlanta & Development team |
| Whitefoord Avenue Streetscape from La France to Bridge on east side                   | Installation of streetscape along MARTA parcel per MR and MRC streetscape requirements   | Bike/Ped            | 2012              |                    | Development Team                   |
| La France street  | Street repaving, removal of speed humps  | Repaving            | 2013              | \$150,000          | City of Atlanta                    |
| La France street Streetscape  | LaFrance Pedestrian Improvements to include wider sidewalks, on street parking with bulb outs, on-street parking, pedestrian lighting, pedestrian crossing, street trees.  | Bike/Ped            | 2013              |                    | Development team/City of Atlanta   |
| Iverson Park  | Iverson Park connection by installing gate/replacing fence at MARTA Edgewood - Candler station   | Bike/Ped            | 2012              | \$10,000           | MARTA                              |

| Housing Projects/Initiatives                |                                   |           |                          |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Description/Action                          | Cost                              | Year      | Responsible Party        |
| See attached Proposed Development Time Line | Varies                            | 2011-2014 | Developer                |
| Rezoning of the property                    | COA Staff Time & Development fees | 2011      | City of Atlanta, MARTA & |

| Other Local Initiatives             |            |      |                   |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------|-------------------|
| Description/Action                  | Cost       | Year | Responsible Party |
| Release of Property for Development | Staff Time | 2011 | MARTA             |
|                                     |            |      |                   |

# **Pre-Charrette Design Assessment Findings**

Edgewood/Candler Park MARTA Station

South Parking Lot Charrette

April 4, 2011

## **Overview**

A team of eight planning and design professionals organized to conduct a pre-charrette design assessment. This document provides background information on the assessment and findings of the assessment that took place on April 4<sup>th</sup>.

## **Pre-Charrette Design Assessment Team**

Findings were produced by the following team members:

- Basak Alkan, AICP, LEED AP, Perkins+Will
- Keith Holser, Southface
- Eric Kronberg, AIA, LEED AP, Kronberg Wall Architects, LLC
- Jonathon S. Lewis, AICP, City of Atlanta, Office of Planning
- Garry Long, Mayson Avenue Cooperative
- John Maximuk, AICP, Livable Communities Coalition
- Caleb Racicot, AICP, LEED AP, Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh & Associates
- Jay Scott, ASLA, Green Rock Partnership
- Eli Tedesco, Southface

## **Purpose and Structure of the Assessment**

The main goal of the pre-charrette design assessment was to develop a body of information for the design team to use when planning and designing the TOD at the south parking lot.

In this assessment, the team focused on the areas around the parking lot. The team assumed that the goal is for the TOD to fit comfortably into the existing neighborhood fabric. The given frame of reference included twenty key topics for the TOD as well as. The standard framework is repeated here:

### **Pedestrian Considerations**

1. Pedestrian access to the site and within the site (internal circulation)
2. Pedestrian experience: considerations human scale, safety, visual appeal, weather

### **Vehicular Considerations**

3. Hierarchy of road types, intensity of use, type of use
4. Note daily or seasonal fluctuations of traffic intensity
5. Role of MARTA buses and shuttles in and out of the site
6. Vehicle circulation within the proposed site
7. Characteristics of vehicular access to the site
8. Characteristics of parking spaces (safety, aesthetics, signage)

Sense of place (buildings reflect sense of identity, buildings frame public spaces)

9. Identify views from the site in all directions and views to the site from all directions (what should be maximize, what should be screened?)
10. Identify predominate architectural style
11. Identify predominate massing levels
12. Identify predominate heights and maximum heights
13. Identify predominate materials of facades
14. Identify predominate patterns of location of doors and windows
15. Identify other unique aspects (i.e. Landmarks, historical markers, idiosyncrasies)
16. Identify predominate vegetation, maturity of vegetation, patterns of vegetation
17. Identify utilities to plan and design around
18. Identify aspects of existing community character to keep (neighborhood expression)
19. identify aspects of existing community character to change

#### Overall Design Principles

20. Identify design principles involving form (transition, transformation, texture), scale (massing, height, human scale) and organization (entrance, alignment, continuity, circulation, connectivity, etc.) that exist in the area and or might be related to the program and intensity of TOD development on the south parking lot.

The findings of the pre-charrette design assessment have been aggregated in this report. Continue reading for all findings.

## Findings (pages 3 through 9)

### Pedestrian access to the site and within the site (internal circulation)

- Free-right from westbound La France onto northbound Whitefoord appears to be over-engineered. Could it be reduced to improve pedestrian safety? A second observer added that “the neighborhood would like to see this right turn eliminated. We have also been in discussions with the city to do a center planting area (aka pedestrian are of refuge) at the middle of Whitefoord on the both sides of the intersection. More on the North, less on the South.”
- Hutchinson is extremely narrow for two-way traffic plus parking. Although give-way streets are often desirable for their traffic calming benefits, alternatives should be explored. A second observer added that “the neighborhood is interested in exploring a one way only option for Hutcheson, and has been for a while.”
- Trucks use LaFrance Street to access the pie factory, but the street still appears to be excessively wide. A min. 10 to 11 ft travel lane is appropriate. Consider cross sectional changes that reduce lane widths, formalized parking with bulbouts at intersections, bicycle need, drainage considerations.
- If peak MARTA parking use occurs during the day, it may be possible to use commuter parking for other uses at night. Compatible uses may include a small theater or arts venue, sit-down restaurants, or similar uses with peak hours in the evening or weekends.
- On street parking on existing streets around the MARTA site should be maximized, rather than off-street spaces that can eat up development areas. Any routes used to access parking or bus loading could be designed as streets, with wide sidewalks and street trees. As little parking as possible should be provided for new uses, with the realm of what can be financed.
- (two other observers agreed with the previous three findings)

### Bike/Ped Transportation

- There is a critical missing sidewalk link on Hutchinson Street; its west side is better suited to accommodate a sidewalk (A second observer noted that this has been a long time request of the neighborhood.)
- MARTA parking creates a barrier between the station and the neighborhood.
- Lack of a bike/pedestrian connection to Iverson park greatly increases the walking distance from transit and discourages its use. A second team member concurred.
- LaFrance and Whitefoord are Secondary Bike Routes in the Connect Atlanta Plan. This process should explore appropriate treatments, most likely bike lanes or sharrow markings.
- Whitefoord recently got sharrow markings, I think La France still needs them, or bike lanes.

- There are poor bicycle parking facilities at the station. Bicycle lockers would encourage more commuter cyclist use; leaving bicycles on a bike rack for nine hours is too long for most people given the high number of bike thefts in Atlanta.

Pedestrian experience: considerations human scale, safety, visual appeal, weather

- There is the non-traditional opportunity to connect Edgewood with Candler Park through an enhanced crossing through the station (i.e. Minneapolis City Walk, etc.)
- There is an opportunity to enhance the experience of walking to the station in the elevated pathway (i.e. screens, surface, weather, etc.) Similarly, the Breeze Card machines obstruct a significant view of the city from the upper platform.
- East edge of parking lot (Edgewood side) includes sidewalk that cuts off abruptly into grass. This must be changed in redevelopment. Also, sidewalks in most areas except for La France/Whitefoord intersection do not have buffer between sidewalk and curb. Such buffers should be standard for redeveloped streetscapes.
- The slope at the west edge of the parking lot site demonstrates recent erosion onto the sidewalk surface.
- The intersection of Whitefoord and DeKalb Avenue is a key gateway to the site. Unless one walk across the MARTA station, this is the only easy way to get to Little 5 Points, Iverson Park, or Candler Park (pool, playground, golf, etc.). As a key gateway to the site, there are numerous opportunities for improvement:
  - There is no pedestrian signal button.
  - Painted pedestrian crossings do not align with curb cuts and in some case end in curbs.
  - Cars exceed speed limits at and around intersection
  - Pedestrian experience under the railroad bridge could be improved.
- User experience at the station reveals that shaded spaces – yet safe spaces – are critical for exemplary pedestrian design. The south parking lot currently does not account for that, but could be prioritized in the redevelopment. The charrette design should never rely on surface paint for pedestrian way-finding – infrastructure, landscaping, and building alignment should be the driving forces!!



## Transit

- MARTA has bus stops extremely close to the station. This decreases bus reliability.
- MARTA may not require all the bus loading areas they have. While a desire to preserve future capacity is understandable, it should not hamper exploration of design alternatives. TDM features such as mandatory transcards, unbundled parking, Zipcars, etc. should be explored to encourage transit use.

## Landscapes/Environment

- Specimen trees exist along the back of the sidewalk on LaFrance and Mayson Avenue on the MARTA site. Are these kept?
- A green buffer exists between MARTA parking and the freight rail. Several unremarkable trees exist in the MARTA parking lots.
- Site redevelopment will require on-site stormwater detention. Explore other options than simply an underground vault. Bioswales, rooftop gardens, etc. may reduce the need for vaulting.

## Vehicular Considerations

Notes on vehicular access are as follows:

- LaFrance travel lanes should be reduced to 11' because of the truck traffic.
- The speed humps on LaFrance should be removed. They are inappropriate on MARTA bus routes.
- There is existing parallel parking on one or both sides of most of the streets in the study area (except DeKalb Ave).
- The north/south bus depots should be combined on one side of the station with real-time arrival/departure information.

## Notes on the bicycle access

- Both MARTA sides of the MARTA Station have bicycle racks.
- Whiteford is a Bicycle Route with ShareROW pavement markings.
- All of the neighborhood streets serving the station are bicycle friendly.
- DeKalb Avenue is very dangerous for bicycles, but a popular weekend bicycle route.
- Bicycles are allowed on MARTA trains at all times.

## Hierarchy of road types, intensity of use, type of use

- A speed bump (or more than one) exists on La France. If the road is narrowed, the speed bump might be removed.

#### Vehicle circulation within the proposed site

- Truck traffic should be considered in the TOD (noise, turning movements, etc.). Additionally, pavement width at northeast corner of site might be excessive despite bus and truck

#### Characteristics of parking spaces (safety, aesthetics, signage)

- It seems possible to include some on-street parking on LaFrance after redevelopment.
- Sense of place (buildings reflect sense of identity, buildings frame public spaces)

#### Identify views from the site in all directions and views to the site from all directions (what should be maximized, what should be screened?)

- The view of the MARTA station (both day and night) should be considered (blank wall, MARTA sign, concrete walls with rust markings). Consider options for this façade. Consider screening. Are there lighting impacts of the station on residents at night?
- Consider views west to the City for future residents of the TOD.
- Consider south-facing opportunities for residents.
- Consider positive/negative aspects of viewing the bus depot at south parking lot. Might there be a better location for the bus depot on the site?
- Fencing is predominant on the site now. Is it possible to remove fencing. How can the TOD fit into the neighborhood with so much fencing?

#### Identify other unique aspects (i.e. Landmarks, historical markers, idiosyncrasies)

- The historical sign on DeKalb Avenue entitled “Noon Under the Trees” is not given proper landscape treatment to encourage pedestrian visitors, could be lighted at night?, could be elevated generally as place of interest.

#### Identify predominate vegetation, maturity of vegetation, patterns of vegetation

- Large, mature deciduous trees exist at the east edge of the parking lot development site.

#### Identify utilities to plan and design around

- Redevelopment should call for removal of obstructions in sidewalks. One or more utility poles obstruct sidewalks in the study area.

#### Design Generally

### *The Green Infrastructure Approach to Edgewood TOD Planning:*

I think Atlanta's planning needs to be more oriented towards water: water is an amenity that we have aplenty (as it falls through the sky) AND, ironically, only a little of (as it comes through our tap). Atlanta is a city of great topography, which combined with our street and development patterns, leads to systematic flooding of lower zones.

That said, I believe that this site has all the right elements to showcase a best-management approach to stormwater management. This could become a driver for the site planning (including layout of buildings) and urban design. There is an opportunity to create a green space / stormwater bioretention facility on the site that feeds into the existing unbuildable lot (where the townhomes were proposed) north of La France street, which drains south. This "green finger" could become the major public spine / pedestrian route through the property: it could connect with the pedestrian exit from the MARTA, and extend all the way to Iverson Park across the tracks, connecting Candler Park to Edgewood. (The old route through Iverson Park to the MARTA lot should be opened up at North and made into a safe passage to make this viable).

I think having topo information (and someone who is able to read / design with it) at the charrette would be very important.

#### Integration to Neighborhood / Pedestrian Scale

While I am generally a proponent of buildings that line the street edge, I am not certain that the urban wall created by the proposed Edgewood TOD plan is the right step for the neighborhood. First, I think that there's value in maintaining a strong edge of single family homes (some of which are quite beautiful -- and a new one is being built!) south of La France. The multi-family development could face this historic neighborhood edge with a series of large, south-facing residential courtyards. Lining up these courtyards with the existing neighborhood streets (Mayson, Lowry, Hutchison) to reduce the impact of the scale-jump. South-facing courtyards could be a great asset for the apartment communities, and create more eyes on La France. The back-end of the property (facing MARTA) could be lined with parking garages to mitigate the sound of freight trains, however, it should also contain a loop road (similar to the one shown on the plan) to make it safe back there for pedestrians.

#### *Design Comments*

- MARTA station design does not respect its context. New development could screen it, but a well defined pedestrian corridor to LaFrance Street should still be provided.
- Topography at the northwest corner of Whitefoord and LaFrance lends itself to a park-under building type or one that steps with topography.
- Any retail on the site will want visibility from Whitefoord. The current stop sign is a great retail asset.
- I think this is a superior suggestion as compared to the location shown in the site plan from the master plan.
- All of the traditional buildings in the area front the street with a porch and 10 - 20 feet of landscaping; some have a knee wall, common yard, or fence. Few buildings historically fronted on La-France directly across from the station.

- It may be an appropriate design gesture to incorporate the traditional 10-20 ft landscape front yard on the south side of LaFrance, preferably with a fence, knee wall, or hedge at the back of sidewalk. Porches a min of 8 ft in depth should be provided. This would reflect the historic residential frontage found in the area.
- Retail on LaFrance Street will be tough today; buildings should be designed for flexibility to change with the market. Residential units can accomplish this through higher glass percentages, 14 ft ceiling heights, at-grade doors (that allow future retail without running into ADA issues) and 5 to 10 ft front yard on the north side (landscaped today and eventually converted to sidewalk dining or display if the use changes).
- A terminus exists on the MARTA site where Lowry meets LaFrance. It should be respected the design process. Several other secondary termini exit on the MARTA site (Mayson and Hutchinson) that currently direct the eye towards the MARTA tracks. These should be explored.
- Layout in the master plan site plan works pretty well bringing Hutcheson and Lowry into the site - worth a look at keeping this layout.
- Upper story uses may have a nice view of downtown to the west.
- The rail bridge is an art opportunity.
- The charrette team might propose alternate MARTA signs for the site because the existing signs do not fit with the neighborhood character in style or more importantly scale. This is especially true for the column sign near the middle of the parking lot on La France. This sign is more appropriate in scale and style with a shopping center! A re-design can incorporate practical way-finding goals and MARTA branding while at the same time achieving a better fit with the area.
- Question: there is a small pedestrian crossing at the northeast corner of the site to the railroad tracks (through a fence). There is also evidence of service vehicles driving over lawn to reach this area. What will become of this and what is the impact if residents live nearby?

### *Design Comments*

- MARTA is not pedestrian friendly, so there is no real connection to the neighborhood – as if it were planned as only a commuter service.
- The bakery is very busy. Is there enough base (together with the other nearby industries) to support lunch/food commercial? Residential facing the bakery will not be desirable.
- Bus drop-off on both sides of the rail is duplicitous. The space taken up by the bus drop-off is tremendous – it should be relocated to the north side.
- There is no way to make the view of the railroad attractive for residential units.
- The station is “monumental” in design – stark concrete, etc. current zoning will assure that it remains the tallest structure in the area (like a monument). Although buildings along La France should remain 304 stories max, there may be rationale for increasing the height along the railroad.

- A direct pedestrian connection from Lowry may be feasible, continuing across the tracks.
- Pedestrian facilities on Whiteford under the tracks should be improved.
- Trees around the perimeter are nice, but proper development of the site would be worth sacrificing them if necessary. Trees in the parking lot are not worth working around – it is amazing they have even survived under the conditions.

*One of the pre-charrette design assessment participants submitted additional information based on past planning efforts. This information is provided below.*

- Master Plan recommendations for MARTA

It is atypical for a MARTA station to feel like anything that is of a neighborhood scale, but it is possible; and the Master Plan casts a vision for the station to transform into that very kind of place. The redevelopment of the site will extend the existing neighborhood streets to the south into the site to better connect it to the community and to give this site the same framework and character of the existing community. It is important for the actual entrance of the MARTA station to also be integrated into the design of a building or structure so that it better fits into the landscape, similar to what has been done or is being planned at other MARTA stations in the system. The remainder of the site should have an architecture and site design that is consistent with the neighborhood at large and does not create an area that feels that it is not a part of the overall neighborhood.

- Urban design recommendations for MARTA include:

Connect to path/trail system through the neighborhood  
 Connect to Eastside Trail  
 Extend Hutchinson St and Lowry St into the MARTA site  
 Buildings brought up to the street, more urban in nature  
 Design station as a Gateway to the neighborhood  
 Design MARTA entrance into the design of new development  
 Provide new streets and sidewalks and street trees on the site as part of redevelopment  
 Pedestrian-oriented design for accessory office/retails uses  
 Design a park/open space element as a front door for MARTA and the Edgewood neighborhood





