

## **MARTA Statement on Brookhaven/Oglethorpe University TOD**

On Tuesday, January 24, the Mayor of the City of Brookhaven, Mr. John Ernst, released a statement regarding the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority's ("MARTA") proposed Brookhaven/Oglethorpe University TOD project ("Brookhaven TOD Project"). Mayor Ernst's statement indicated the City administration's support for an additional delay in the rezoning of the site. Additionally, Mayor Ernst's statement indicated that the City administration would suspend all work on the incentive request submitted to the Brookhaven Development Authority. In light of this letter, today, February 2, the MARTA Board of Directors voted to cancel the award of the solicitation and discontinue work on the Brookhaven TOD Project.

MARTA has been working to implement the Brookhaven TOD Project for over 10 years. The planning process started with the Brookhaven-Peachtree Livable Centers Initiative Plan which was completed through an Atlanta Regional Commission ("ARC") planning grant with the purpose of developing a long-range plan for the Brookhaven-Peachtree area, including the station area. The plan was developed over a six-month period with extensive involvement from Brookhaven area residents and several local stakeholders. A vision was developed for the Brookhaven/Oglethorpe University Station area which included a mixed-use center organized around a central open space and positioned in a dense, pedestrian environment. The Brookhaven Peachtree Overlay was adopted in 2007 to uphold the recommendations from the LCI study. In 2013, Southface and ARC hosted a 4-day community charrette focused on the redevelopment which affirmed the overlay framework.

Based on this planning framework, in January 2015 MARTA initiated the solicitation process for the redevelopment of the underutilized park and ride lots at the Brookhaven/Oglethorpe University Station. This was done with support and significant input from City of Brookhaven staff and elected officials. The Brookhaven City Manager, Marie Garrett, was included as a member of MARTA's evaluation committee that reviewed all proposals submitted to MARTA for the Brookhaven TOD Project. Councilmember Bates Mattison created the Citizen Review Board to provide proponents with feedback from the community to help proponents develop proposals that were inclusive of community input.

In September 2015, MARTA selected Brookhaven City Center Partners ("BCCP") as our development partner. Beginning in February 2016, MARTA and BCCP voluntarily participated in well-over 20 community meetings to solicit input on the proposed Brookhaven TOD Project, including, without limitation, hosting three City-wide forums, four council district meetings, six Citizen Review Board meetings, over 10 small group neighborhood meetings, and setting up and staffing information booths at three of the Brookhaven Food Truck Round-Ups. MARTA also engaged the public online through a project-specific website with information on the project scope, timeline, renderings and a community forum. MARTA also created an online survey to which 565 people responded. Multiple meetings were also held throughout 2016 with the City of Brookhaven. MARTA

engaged in an unprecedented level of community engagement for the Brookhaven TOD Project, which exceeded efforts required for the Avondale TOD project, Edgewood/Candler Park TOD project, Chamblee TOD project and the educational activity associated with the successful More MARTA campaign for the \$2.5 billion sales tax referendum.

Despite this high level of engagement and stated support for the project, the City repeatedly sought to delay the rezoning approval required for the Brookhaven TOD Project. In February 2016, Mayor Ernst requested that BCCP delay submission of their rezoning application until after June 1, 2016. The Brookhaven Planning Commission then deferred their vote on the project 30 days and the Brookhaven City Council deferred their vote an additional 90 days. Elected officials then advised BCCP to submit a request for a postponement of their hearing an additional 30 days to February 28, 2017. Mayor Ernst's statement clearly articulates the need for further delays in implementing the Brookhaven TOD Project without a clear path forward. The City has been working on this project for years and has had multiple opportunities to ensure that the Brookhaven TOD Project provides a "City Center perspective." Furthermore, the need for public financing to support the project has been communicated to the City since the inception of the public solicitation process, which afforded the City adequate time to coordinate with the various stakeholders and establish City required policies and procedures.

MARTA appreciates the time and effort invested by the community in planning for Brookhaven TOD Project. We are disappointed that we will not be able to advance this project to implementation. MARTA staff will now shift focus to implementing TOD projects at stations where greater readiness exists.