

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Line Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study



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Transit Oriented Development
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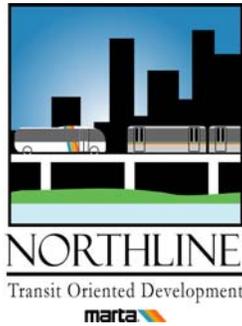
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority



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North Line Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study



Prepared For:
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority



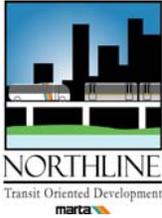
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North Line Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study

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There is growing concern in the metropolitan Atlanta region about increasing traffic congestion, long commutes, air quality, fuel prices, and greenspace/open space depletion. Transit oriented development (TOD) patterns and major investments in transit are viewed as ways to combat or alleviate these problems. TOD refers to development activity located along or within walking distance to transit routes or stations that mixes residential, retail, office, and public uses in a walkable environment, making it convenient for residents and employees to travel by transit, bicycle or foot.

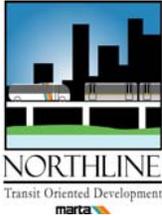
North Fulton County is one of the fastest growing sub-regions in the Atlanta region. The North Line study area has experienced a dramatic increase in growth in the past decade with the extension of GA 400 from I-285 to I-85. The GA 400 corridor, in North Fulton County, has become a regional center for population and employment growth. The study area formerly functioned as a bedroom community to downtown Atlanta, but is increasingly functioning as a regional employment center. Despite growth in the area, prior analysis indicated that land use densities within the corridor would need to increase to support a future North Line expansion.

In February 2003, MARTA initiated the North Line Alternatives Analysis to evaluate potential expansion alternatives and select a locally preferred alternative (LPA) for a North Line extension. During the analysis, ridership projections using the ARC's regional travel demand model, and transit suitability analysis suggested that the study area was not very transit supportive due to a combination of high incomes and low household and employment densities. Subsequently, the decision was made to redirect future planning activities and undertake a land use and market analysis study to assess the potential for TOD and encourage new development patterns along the GA 400 corridor to support future MARTA expansion in North Fulton County.

The resulting North Line Transit Oriented Development Study is intended to promote transit supportive development patterns along the Georgia State Route 400 (GA 400) corridor. The study examined seven cluster areas (referred to as TOD clusters) along the corridor considered to have strong potential to develop as a regional draw with a focus on density, diversity, and design of future land uses at these locations. The North Line TOD Study offered a new opportunity to examine transit expansion feasibility in the GA 400 corridor through the possible implementation of new development patterns. The study was coordinated with and modeled after the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program, under MARTA sponsorship, to enhance the potential for acceptance as a future LCI community under ARC's program.

The study has been guided by a comprehensive development strategy that supports the following ARC regional program goals for the development of the most suitable emerging regional center:

- Encourage diversity of residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping, and recreation choices at the activity/town center level.



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- Give housing a strong focus to create mixed-income neighborhoods and support the concept of aging in place.
- Encourage development that offers access to a range of travel modes (transit, roadways, walking, and biking) and uses.
- Provide connectivity to cities, major activity and employment centers, and institutional facilities.
- Implement an outreach process that promotes involvement of all stakeholders.

Overall, this study effort is intended to support the long term goal of expanding fixed guideway transit service into North Fulton County. The study area for the North Line TOD Study is shown in Figure 1. The Cities of Roswell and Alpharetta are located within the study area. The southernmost cluster is centered at Northridge Road and GA 400. The northernmost cluster area is located just north of Windward Parkway. The TOD cluster areas, from south to north, are as follows.

Northridge - located around the interchange of GA 400 and Northridge Road.

Holcomb Bridge - located around the interchange of GA 400 and Holcomb Bridge Road.

North Point - the largest of the clusters, extends from the interchange of GA 400 and Mansell Road to Haynes Bridge Road.

Old Milton - located around the interchange of GA 400 and Old Milton Parkway.

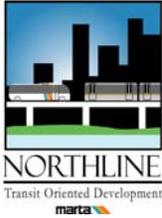
Windward South - located to the south and east of the interchange of GA 400 and Windward Parkway.

Windward North - located to the west and north of the interchange of GA 400 and Windward Parkway.

McGinnis Ferry - located at the Fulton County/Forsyth County line, where McGinnis Ferry Road crosses GA 400.

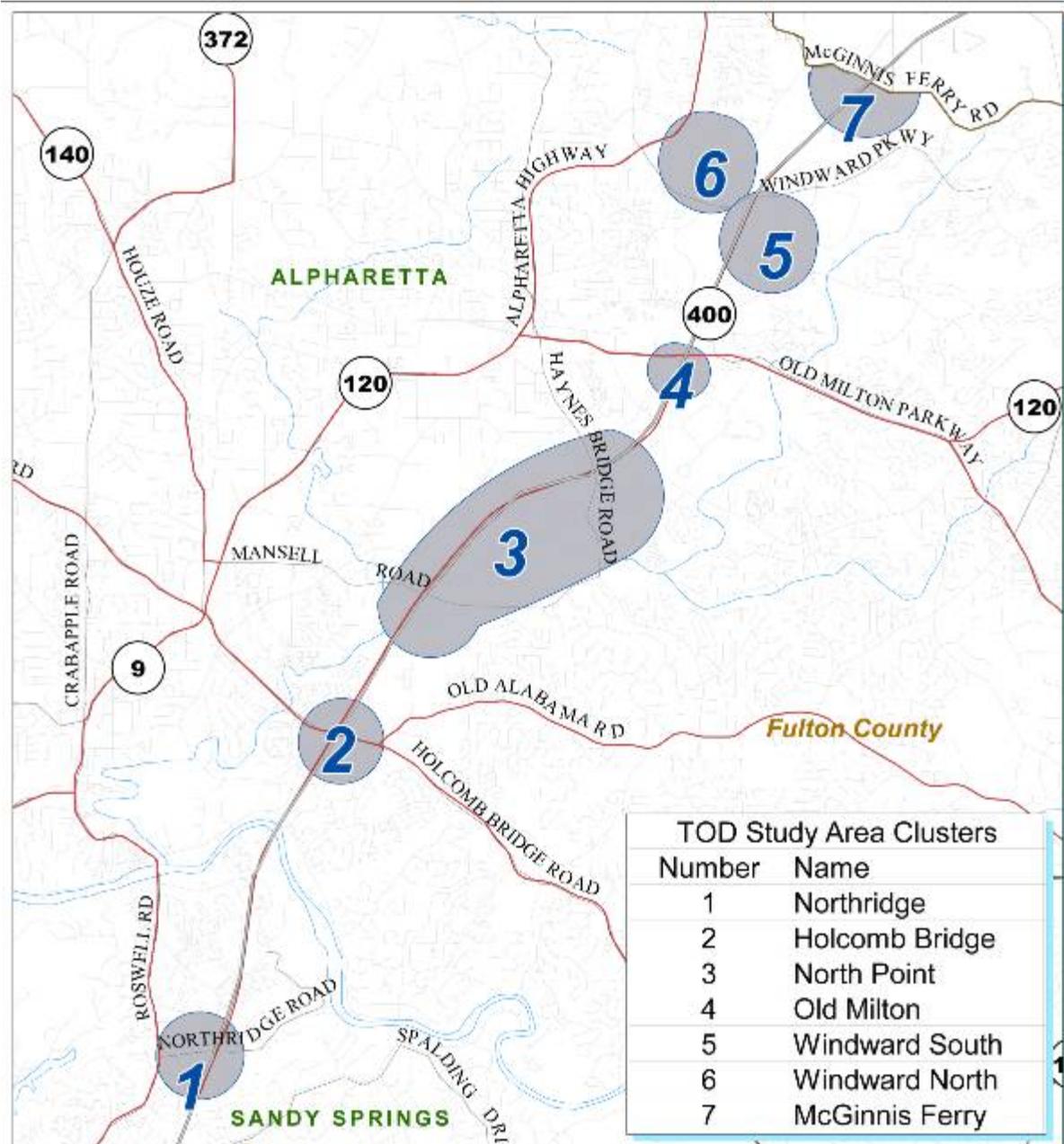
Study Approach

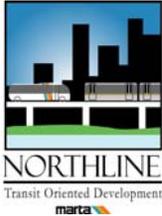
The North Line TOD Study process involved three phases. In Phase 1, the seven clusters were evaluated based on demographics, land use, zoning, and transportation to determine the most suitable sites for TOD. The purpose of this phase was to narrow down the number of cluster areas from seven to a maximum of four. In Phase 2, the four most suitable clusters for TOD were further examined to determine the most suitable site for a future TOD prototype in the GA 400 corridor. This evaluation considered a more detailed analysis of population and employment characteristics, market trends, market potential, including planned and proposed developments/improvements, as well as existing zoning and potential future land use.



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Figure 1: North Line TOD Study Area





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The four remaining clusters were narrowed down to one focus area, considered to have the greatest relevant development potential, based on technical analysis and stakeholder input. In Phase 3, the study team developed an implementation framework for the preferred TOD cluster area based on market analysis and accepted planning and design practices for successful transit oriented development.

Early partnerships with citizens, elected officials, businesses, institutional organizations, civic associations and community leaders were vital for the identification of the most suitable location for future TOD. As a result, the North Line planning effort was structured around an extensive community/stakeholder outreach program to promote understanding of TOD concepts, strategies and opportunities. The North Line TOD Study's Public Involvement Program was built upon the existing framework of participation created by the previous North Line AA process which included:

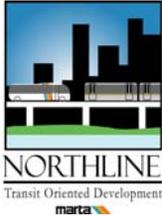
- Public Meetings/Workshops
- Public Opinion Survey
- Extensive Stakeholder Interviews
- Corridor Advisory Group Meetings

Phase 1 – Existing Conditions Analysis

Based on the analysis of existing demographic, land use and transportation conditions, Northridge, Holcomb Bridge, North Point and Old Milton demonstrated the highest potential for TOD. In terms of demographic evaluation factors, Holcomb Bridge, Northridge, Old Milton and North Point had the greatest population and employment densities. North Point showed lower population and employment densities when compared to the other four clusters due to its large footprint of approximately 1,600 acres.

The land use, zoning and development analysis indicated Holcomb Bridge, North Point, Old Milton and Windward Parkway North as the most transit supportive clusters. These cluster areas had the largest proportions of transit supportive land uses (commercial, industrial, high-density and multi-family residential, and transitional-urban other. In terms of land use, zoning and development initiatives, the four cluster areas, Holcomb Bridge, North Point, Old Milton, and Windward Parkway, presented the greatest potential for TOD.

Based on the transportation analyses, the four southern most cluster areas (Northridge, Holcomb Bridge, North Point, and Old Milton) appeared to possess a relatively greater potential for supporting future TOD than the other cluster areas. The Northridge cluster area ranked highest in terms of the travel pattern evaluation factor and was associated with the highest number of daily transit trips. The Holcomb Bridge cluster area exhibited the greatest trip activity in 2005 and resulted in the second highest number of daily commute trip productions.



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In 2005, the Old Milton cluster area had a moderate amount of daily commute and other trips to the existing North Line areas; however, the street network connectivity measure for the cluster area was low. In contrast, the Northridge, Holcomb Bridge, and North Point cluster areas were associated with the highest street network connectivity values.

The results of the Phase 1 analysis were reviewed with stakeholders to obtain their perspectives on which clusters were the most suitable for TOD and to narrow down the number of cluster areas for more detailed analysis and development of a preliminary concept. Using the results of the preliminary analysis of demographic factors, land use and development patterns and extensive meetings with stakeholders and the public, the original seven sites were narrowed to four potential sites: Holcomb Bridge, North Point, Old Milton and Windward, which combined the North and South Windward clusters.

The Northridge cluster did not advance because of the limited amount of developable land. The area around Northridge Road and GA 400 is already built out and would require considerable redevelopment efforts for TOD. Stakeholders felt strongly that the cluster areas with higher percentages of undeveloped land and strong redevelopment potential should be given higher standing in the analysis process. Stakeholders also recommended that the Windward South and Windward North clusters be combined, given their proximity, to one another to present a stronger candidate for future transit oriented development. The McGinnis Ferry cluster area exhibited a poor performance in a majority of evaluation factors.

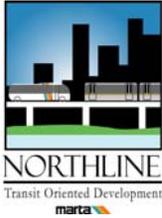
Phase 2 – Emerging Regional Center Analysis

A market overview for each of the four remaining cluster areas (Holcomb Bridge, North Point, Old Milton and Windward), the emerging regional centers, was undertaken in terms of demographic characteristics, market, development, and real estate trends. In addition to the market analysis, a transit suitability analysis of specific sites in each cluster area was undertaken to evaluate their potential as a future TOD site based on development densities, accessibility, connectivity, walkability, land availability and appropriateness as a potential MARTA station.

The market analysis of the four alternative locations to determine the most suitable site for a future MARTA station and TOD was based on four factors:

1. The anticipated demand for the transit services from the *existing residents and employees* in each of the four cluster alternatives.
2. The anticipated increase of demand *from growth of residents and employees* in the cluster area that would add to the potential demand for transit services.
3. The anticipated increase of demand from *commercial real estate growth* in the current development pipeline.
4. The presence of *available land for transit related development opportunities* at each of the four alternative locations.

Based on the four factors considered, the ranking of the cluster areas, with one (1) being best and four (4) worst, was as follows:



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**Table 1
Market Assessment of TOD Potential**

	Holcomb Bridge	North Point	Old Milton	Windward
Current Conditions	3	1	4	2
Future Growth (Residents and Employees)	4	1	3	2
Future Growth (Commercial Real Estate)	4	2	1	3
Developable Land	4	1	3	2
Average	3.75	1.25	2.75	2.25

Source: Claritas/ARC/BAG

Based on this assessment, the North Point cluster area had the greatest potential for TOD, followed by the Windward and Old Milton cluster areas. Development pipeline and site availability favored Old Milton and North Point. Based on current conditions and future population and employment demand, either North Point or Windward demonstrated the greatest potential for TOD; and based on development activity and available land, Old Milton and North Point demonstrated the greatest potential. Holcomb Bridge is the least desirable of the four clusters, based on its relatively small existing population and employment base, low growth potential and lack of new planned development and available sites, while North Point exhibited significant potential in all categories.

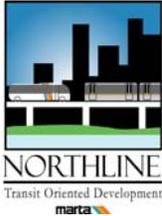
The first task of the transit suitability analysis was to identify possible locations for the future MARTA North Line extension stations. Two basic criteria for locating transit stations are spacing and accessibility. Typically, MARTA stations are spaced between one and three miles apart and are located close to major roadways for area and regional access. Easy access and visibility from major roadways is also a major component of successful TOD projects.

Based on these criteria, the most logical choices for station locations would be sites in the vicinities of the major roadway intersections with GA 400. Figure 2 identifies the six potential station locations and the approximate distances between the stations. Potential station sites, starting from the south, include:

- GA 400 at Holcomb Bridge Road
- GA 400 at Mansell Road (North Point cluster)
- Center Bridge Road (North Point cluster)
- GA 400 at Haynes Bridge Road (North Point cluster)
- GA 400 at Old Milton Parkway
- GA 400 at Windward Parkway

Figure 2: Potential MARTA Station Location Sites





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The second task of the transit suitability analysis was to identify surrounding areas at these locations that were suitable for development or redevelopment. A key consideration in developing viable TODs is the availability of large, contiguous parcels that can accommodate a variety of higher density, mixed use developments. The optimum site would be a circle with a one-half-mile radius that is centered on the proposed transit station. This was the basic guideline used for evaluating the potential for TODs at the six potential MARTA station sites.

Based on the transit suitability analysis, the locations with the highest potential for TOD would be Old Milton Parkway, Center Bridge Road and Mansell Road. The transit suitability analysis, coupled with the market analysis, suggested that one of the North Point locations, either the Center Bridge Road or Mansell Road location, would be most suitable for TOD. In the short term, the Center Bridge Road location was considered to have the most potential for TOD because of its central location, proximity to the North Point Mall and its connection to the Cousins Westside Development currently underway.

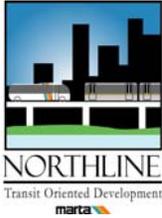
Phase 3- Potential TOD Concept and Assessment

The assessment of the top four TOD cluster areas and six potential station locations, as well as stakeholder and public input, identified the Center Bridge Road location in the North Point cluster as the best location for development of a prototypical MARTA TOD station. Using the area development, TOD connectivity principles, current zoning and future zoning potential, a concept plan was prepared to illustrate potential circulation and development patterns and densities for a TOD cluster around the Center Bridge Road and GA 400 intersection.

A MARTA station could be located in any one of the four quadrants of the intersection. For the purpose of this analysis, the proposed North Point MARTA station location is on the southwest corner of the intersection of GA 400 and Center Bridge Road. While detailed future engineering and transportation analysis may dictate other locations within the market area for the station, this location is considered the best potential station location to encourage transit oriented development for the following reasons.

Site Access

The site has excellent access for the station area from all four directions. Proximity to North Point and Westside Parkways provides access to GA 400 to both the interchange to the north (Old Milton) and the interchange to the south (Haynes Bridge). This allows direct access without limiting the surrounding development, which could occur with a site too close to the transportation infrastructure. Center Bridge Road would provide east-west connectivity while avoiding traffic congestion associated with ingress and egress on GA 400. There is potential to provide park and ride facilities for the MARTA station. The existing MARTA line is currently located on the east side of GA 400, and this new station location would provide direct transit station access to the North Point Mall and the Mansell Crossing Shopping Center area.



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Site Visibility

The site offers excellent visibility to GA 400, and with proper design, could have excellent visibility from surrounding land uses as well. The development sites along Westside Parkway provide for a TOD development which is organized around the station and would have major frontage/presence along this important arterial.

Surrounding Land Uses

The proposed MARTA station site is bordered by a new multi-family rental housing project under construction by Wood Partners and townhomes by John Weiland a block to the north, GA 400 to the east, undeveloped land to the south and Sanctuary Park office park and the southern portion of Encore by Cousins Properties to the west. The Encore development includes a mix of uses including a senior-housing development under construction, a future hotel/conference facility and an amphitheater.

Site Conclusions

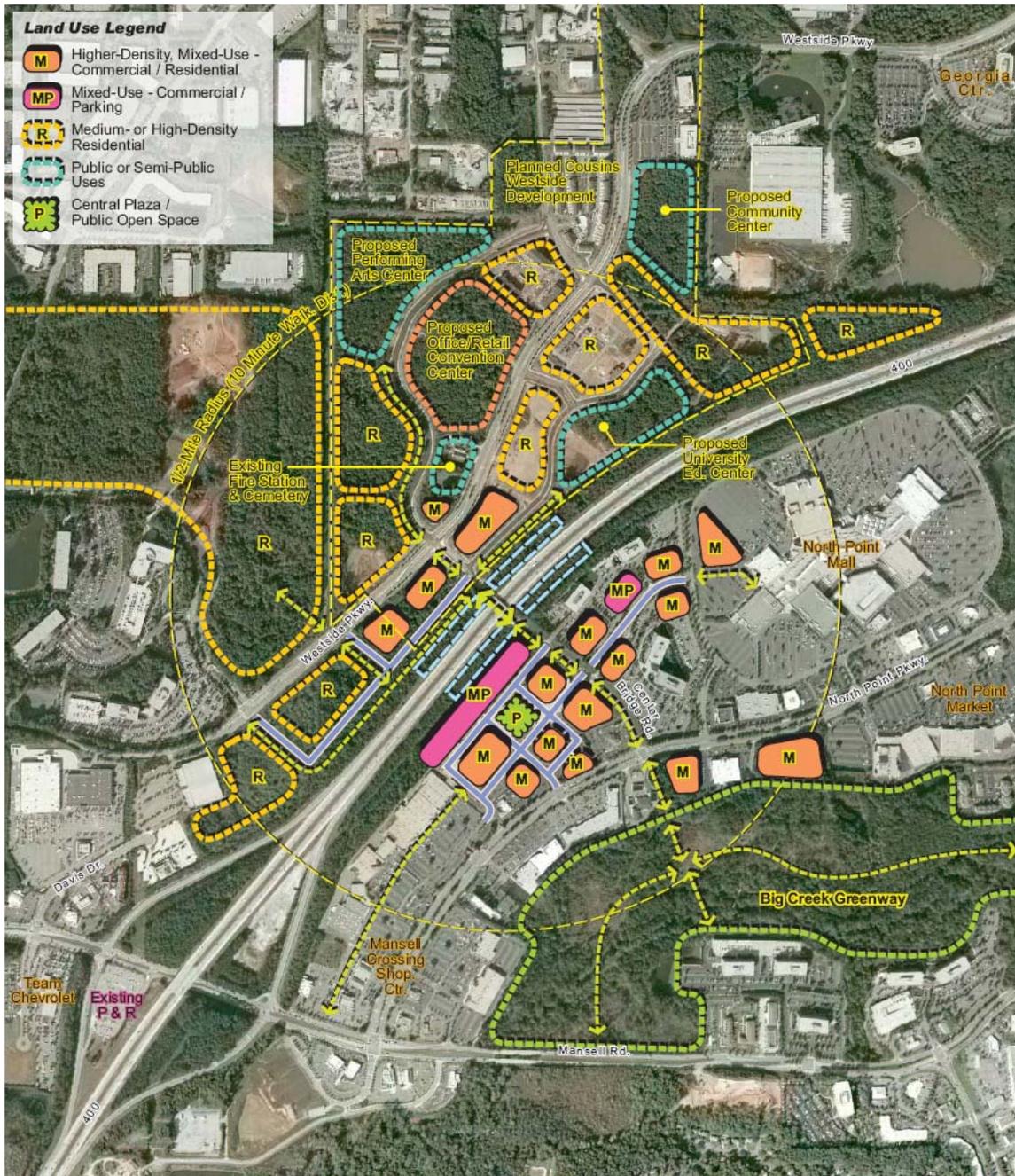
The preferred station site is vacant and large enough to accommodate a transit station and associated infrastructure. In addition, several of the most proximate sites are still vacant and could be developed in a manner consistent with a TOD. There is also significant new development occurring to the north of the proposed station, which could be compatible with a TOD concept. The combination of vacant parcels and transit friendly development is unique in the area and would be ideal as a site for the proposed station.

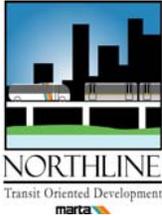
TOD Concept Plan

The major feature of the concept plan is the redevelopment of the northern third of the Mansell Crossing Shopping Center and the area between Center Bridge Road and North Point Mall into a high density, mixed use TOD urban cluster that would adjoin the MARTA station, as shown in Figure 3. Key elements of this TOD urban cluster concept include:

- Mixed use developments on the blocks in the urban cluster that would include commercial uses and restaurants on the ground level and high-density residential uses on the upper levels. Emphasis should be placed on maximizing residential uses in the core area of the TOD cluster in order to create a viable and vibrant 24-hour community.
- A mixed use facility along the west side of GA 400 that would include commercial uses on the ground level and parking on the upper levels to support the uses in the urban cluster, as well as to provide park and ride spaces for the MARTA station.
- A central plaza/public open space, in the middle of the urban cluster, that would serve as a focal feature for the TODs.

Figure 3: Center Bridge Road TOD Concept





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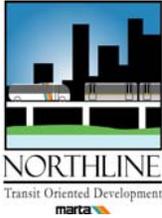
- In-fill developments, north of Center Bridge Road, which would replace the large parking lots with higher density, mixed use developments, and would include a mixed use parking structure to replace the lost parking and provide parking for the new developments.
- A building and walkway link to North Point Mall.

The area west of GA 400 would be developed in a similar fashion as the east side, with the highest density, mixed use developments located closest to the bridgehead. The uses shown in the northwest quadrant reflect the currently proposed Cousins Westside Development plan and include higher density, mixed use developments close to the bridge, as well as higher density residential, senior housing, and a number of public and semi-public uses, such as the proposed university education center, a performing arts center, and a community center. Figure 4 provides an example of a comparable type of development envisioned for the Center Bridge Road TOD cluster.

A key component of the TOD concept plan would be improved pedestrian and bicyclist access across GA 400. The two ways to improve this connection would be to add a separate pedestrian/bicyclist bridge, or widen and improve the walkway on the existing roadway bridge. In addition, the plan recommends a comprehensive pedestrian/bicyclist path system that would connect the MARTA station to existing and proposed developments around the station, which would be located on both sides of GA 400.

In summary, the key elements to a successful TOD cluster at the intersection of Center Bridge Road with GA 400 would be:

- Replacement of some of the low density uses and large surface parking lots, as well as development of vacant parcels, with higher density, mixed use developments;
- Creation of a vibrant, mixed use, 24-hour community; and
- Incorporation of a comprehensive, safe, and convenient pedestrian/bicyclist path system that encourages walking and biking.



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Figure 4: Center Bridge Road TOD Concept

Center Bridge Road Southeast Quadrant Core Area TOD Concept

Proposed Redevelopment of the Center Bridge Core Area as a TOD

Example Development Illustrating Similar Densities, Land Uses, and Patterns to those Proposed for the Center Bridge Area TOD

- Mixed-Use Developments
- Commercial / Office / Residential Uses
- 4- to 6-Story Buildings
- Parking in Underground Garages or Integrated in the Developments



Enhanced, Covered Pedestrian Walk Across GA Highway 400

Central Plaza / Public Open Space Focal Feature for the TOD



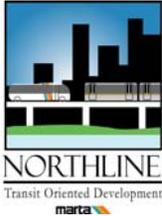
Aerial View of Example Development (St. Louis Park, MN)



Pedestrian-Oriented Streetscapes



On-Street Parking for Convenience and Traffic Calming



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A transit system is only as good as the ability to locate a concentration of transit users within a convenient distance of the transit stations and provide good access to the stations. The MARTA system would serve as the backbone of the regional transit system, and it would provide access to the Atlanta core area, other regional activity centers, and other MARTA stations and park and ride facilities. The Center Bridge Road MARTA station would act as the “gateway” to the transit system as well as the focus of the TODs. A dense street grid pattern of approximately 300-foot square blocks would facilitate circulation within the urban cluster and provide convenient access to the MARTA station. These streets should be pedestrian-friendly and include on-street parking for convenience and for traffic-calming. The development and transit service areas around the proposed MARTA station can be divided into three concentric rings:

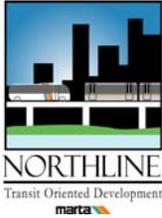
- The first major ring lies within one-half mile or a ten-minute walk from the station. Within the one-half-mile radius zone, and especially the one-quarter-mile zone, the development should be the most intense, and the roadway and path system also needs to be dense.
- The second ring is the zone that lies within a one-mile radius of the station and may be less intensely developed than the inner ring. Access to the transit station from this zone would be by bicycle, area shuttle, feeder bus, or automobile.
- The third ring lies outside the one-mile radius and includes the various developments and residential neighborhoods in the transit system service area. Access to the transit station from this zone would be by feeder bus or automobile.

Concept Development Plan

The North Point TOD concept plan includes 350 acres of proposed development surrounding the intersection of Center Bridge Road and GA 400. The plan calls for a mix of uses, including medium density residential development, office and retail, as well as institutional uses including the MARTA station, a performing arts center, a community center and a university or other institutional campus. The goal is to create a variety of uses that will create a 24-hour transit oriented village center, complement the existing land uses at North Point, and generate MARTA ridership. The proposed development would take advantage of vacant parcels on the west side of GA 400 and stimulate infill development on existing low density office and retail space on the east side of GA 400.

In total, the North Point TOD would include:

- 4,914 residential units, including 243 single family homes, 810 townhomes, 1,870 condominiums and 1,991 apartments;
- 55,000 square feet of local service/convenience retail and restaurants to support the new residential development but not compete with the substantial existing lifestyle and destination retail in the area;
- 1,088,060 square feet of office space, building upon the current office inventory; and



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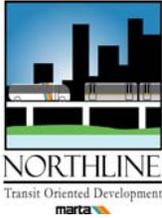
- An 110,000 square foot hotel and convention center.

Due to the very large scale of the TOD project, it is recommended that the project be completed in three phases over twenty years as presented in Tables 2 and 3 and illustrated in Figure 5.

Phase I, from 2006-2011, shown in red, includes those parcels closest to the preferred MARTA station site. The sites are generally either undeveloped or already under construction and would be the most likely locations to create a significant number of residential units around the MARTA station. These blocks would likely be at the highest density to create a pedestrian friendly TOD environment. Phase I would include 1,256 residential units, 65,000 square feet of retail and 40,000 square feet of office space.

Phase II, from 2012-2017, shown in orange, would complete the build out of remaining undeveloped parcels on the west side of GA 400 proximate to the station. Phase II would be comprised of 1,774 residential units, 30,000 square feet of retail space, 145,000 square feet of office space and 110,000 square feet of hotel/convention center space.

Phase III, from 2018-2027, shown in yellow, would extend the mixed use village concept across Center Bridge Road to the east side of GA 400. This area, which currently includes low density strip retail development and mid-density office development, would be redeveloped by consolidating parking into structures and using current surface lots for new residential and commercial development. When completed, Phase III would contain 1,885 residential units, 60,000 square feet of retail space and 903,060 square feet of office space. The economic costs of infill redevelopment of existing retail properties, with long term national tenant leases in place, will be substantial and will likely happen only if Phase I and Phase II are successful and generate significant momentum and economic justification for Phase III.



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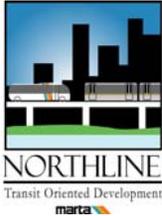
**Table 2
North Point Station Area Potential Development Plan**

Site	Acres	Current Use	Proposed Use	Phase	Developable Acres	Residential				Commercial		
						SF	TH	CO	APT	Retail	Office	Hotel
1	7	Vacant	Mixed Use	1	6				210	15,000		
2	12	Vacant	Mixed Use	1	3			105		20,000		
3	4	Vacant	Mixed Use	1	4			76	50	10,000		
4	17	Vacant	Retail	1	15		49			20,000	40,000	
5	13	U/C-Res	Retail	1	11			188	80			
6	22	Vacant	CON	2	20		40		200	10,000	100,000	110,000
7	4	Com-Res	Retail	1	4			210				
8	7	U/C	Retail	1	6				210			
9	11	U/C	Retail	1	10		77					
10	9	Vacant	Retail	2	8		52	32				
11	14	Vacant	Retail	2	13		52		163			
12	11	Vacant	Retail	2	10		40	124				
13	12	Vacant	Retail	2	11		43		135			
14	108	Vacant	Retail	2	97	243	311	170	170	20,000	45,000	
15	8	Com-Ret	Mixed Use	3	7			252		15,000		
16	31	Com-Ret	Mixed Use	3	23		74	241	207			
17	18	Com-Off	M/MP	3	17				291	40,000	15,000	
18	17	Com-Ret	Mixed Use	3	15				275	5,000		
19	10	Com-Ret	Mixed Use	3	9		72				300,000	
20	15	Com-Ret	Mixed Use	3	14			473			588,060	
Total	350				302	243	810	1,870	1,991	155,000	1,088,060	110,000

Source: URS Corporation, Bleakly Advisory Group

Figure 5: TOD Development Plan





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Table 3
North Point TOD Potential Build Out Summary by Phase

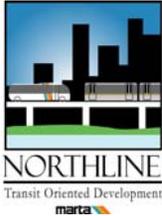
	Total Acres	Developable Acres	Residential				Commercial		
			SF	TH	CO	APT	Retail	Office	Hotel
Phase 1	74	59		127	579	550	65,000	40,000	
Phase 2	176	159	243	537	326	668	30,000	145,000	110,000
Phase 3	100	85		146	966	773	60,000	903,000	
Grand Total	350	302	243	810	1,870	1,991	155,000	1,088,060	110,000

Source: URS Corporation, Bleakly Advisory Group

Public Outreach Approach and Input

The outreach process used a variety of methods for engaging and informing the public including stakeholder interviews, meetings, and surveys. As a result of these outreach efforts, valuable input was incorporated into the North Line TOD Study process. Given below are the resounding themes presented:

- Residents and employees alike tend to be very supportive of both TOD design principles *and* a new MARTA rail station.
- Residents and employees are very interested in alternative ways to reduce their commute times. Over three-quarters (76 percent) believe it is important to have nearby access to MARTA rail as their community grows, with just as many wishing they would reduce the amount of time they spend driving.
- Residents who currently have longer commutes and live further from a MARTA rail station (i.e., those from the northern portion of the corridor) are more likely to want to take a MARTA train to work.
- The biggest barriers to current MARTA ridership among residents in the corridor are logistical in nature: 75 percent would ride it more if there was a station closer to their home, 63 percent would ride it more if it took less time to reach their destination, and 60 percent would ride it more if they had to wait less time for a train.
- Residents from the northern portion of the corridor hold MARTA to higher standards when it comes to reliability, cleanliness, and safety.
- Holcomb Bridge Road, followed closely by Haynes Bridge Road in the North Point cluster (28 percent and 27 percent respectively) are the most popular locations for a new MARTA station among North Fulton residents.
- Support for TOD and higher densities at all four cluster areas.
- North Point cluster has the greatest potential for TOD - regional mall is a retail destination, land reserved for potential MARTA expansion, land designated for university buildings, areas for senior living, amphitheater and arts facility.



North Line Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study

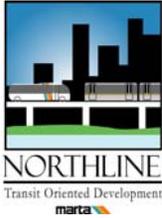
- Most of the land area in several clusters is already developed and limits development/redevelopment opportunities.
- North Point and Old Milton have much more open space for changing zoning and higher density projects.
- Employment nodes are North Point and Old Milton - more transit ridership from employment than existing residential.
- Holcomb Bridge cluster has strong potential with proposed development on SE quadrant.
- Cluster areas with undeveloped land should be given priority consideration.
- Mixed use should be included in all future development plans to reduce trips instead of just concentrating development.
- Provide additional transit options now, such as specialized bus services, while awaiting future rail expansion.
- North Point cluster is already developed and plans are now underway for TOD; focus study efforts elsewhere.
- Holcomb Bridge has high redevelopment potential and employment and residential densities; emphasis on TOD would help to relieve congestion.
- Old Milton has the most undeveloped land and is ideal for future TOD.
- Proximity to existing transit should be a significant factor; start south and move northward.

Recommendations for Station Area Planning and Code Revisions

According to the Alpharetta Interim Zoning Map, there are three zoning districts within approximately a one-half mile radius of the intersection of Center Ridge Road and GA 400. These districts are the Community Unit Plan (CUP) district, the Planned Shopping Center (PSC) district, and the Light Industrial (L-I) district. The zoning ordinance is silent on whether a transit station and its associated uses are permitted in these districts. (However, the zoning ordinance does not ignore all forms of transportation land uses; airports and heliports are listed as conditional uses.) While each of these three zoning districts permits a multitude of uses that could support TOD, the zones either forbid residential uses or allow them at densities that are too low to support a vibrant TOD.

Although no land within the one-half mile radius of a potential transit station location is zoned Mixed Use (MU), this zoning district does offer some promise in promoting TOD. The purpose statement and the review criteria appear to support TOD, as “a pedestrian-focused environment that provides opportunities for living, working, shopping, recreation and entertainment.” However, the maximum densities do not appear to be high enough to support TOD. Densities must be based on those of another zoning district within the city, and the maximum density allowed in any residential district is ten units per acre. Additionally, the mix of uses is weighted toward single-family attached units rather than multi-family units in free-standing or mixed use buildings.

The development standards of zoning districts that support TOD typically rest on three basic principles. The development standards must:



North Line Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study

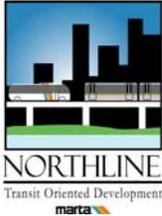
1. *Promote active walkable streets:* Streets adjacent to and within the development must be seen from the perspective of being “public rooms.” As such, building frontages, orientation of buildings, pedestrian amenities, and the desired mix of land uses should be regulated. All these components must be configured to cultivate a comfortable pedestrian atmosphere that allows for public gathering, commerce and convenience.
2. *Provide adequate density, building intensity, and scale:* Certain minimum densities or intensities of housing or employment are needed to create a TOD that truly supports the transit investment. This is typically expressed in terms of minimum residential density (units per acre), or minimum floor-area ratios and minimum building heights. In addition, attention to the massing of the buildings promotes further synergies between the various land uses and activities of the “urban village.” Yet the scale of the development, especially at street level, must remain pedestrian-oriented.
3. *Carefully integrate transit with adjoining development:* The circulation within the development must serve to provide clear and convenient access for transit users, while also accommodating vehicular traffic and parking. Changes in grade, proximity of available parking, and potential obstacles to pedestrian or vehicular traffic flow must be carefully analyzed and any obstacles eliminated or mitigated.

The following recommendations are intended to guide the City of Alpharetta in future station area planning, site plan review of development proposals, design of streets and other public improvements, and considering revisions to its Unified Development Code that would support TOD.

- Achieve a “Gradient” from Core to Edge
- Increase Density Within the Gradient
- Establish the Preferred Mix of Uses
- Establish Range of Building Heights to Achieve Densities
- Use Design Standards to Create Pedestrian Oriented Streets
- Establish Supportive Access Patterns
- Adjust Parking Standards to Take Transit Usage into Account
- Efficient and Comfortable Transit Connections
- Enhance Corridor Environment
- Create a Transit Oriented Overlay District

As the transit station area planning progresses, it may be desirable to consider replacing these existing districts with a new base or underlying district that would encompass all or a portion of the transit station TOD cluster area.

To guide the growth and development along the GA 400 corridor and encourage TOD to support a future expansion of the MARTA North line, MARTA undertook this study to formulate a concept plan that can serve as a blueprint for the community. Through a determination of the existing land use, market, and transportation conditions; direction offered by stakeholders; feedback received from a public opinion survey; and input



North Line Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study

solicited during public meetings; a concept plan has been developed for the North Point area at Center Bridge Road and GA 400 to help guide the types of development and redevelopment to promote creation of TODs along the GA 400 corridor.

There is strong potential and support for a major mixed use TOD at North Point. The current population (both daytime and evening) as well as future population, extensive commercial real estate inventory and future inventory demonstrate a strong and growing potential base for transit ridership. The presence of North Point Mall and more than three million square feet of office space already make the North Point area a regional hub of activity. In 2004, the City of Alpharetta adopted a new land use plan to allow the area to develop in a more balanced, mixed use manner, thus creating a mature well-developed activity center that can serve as a model for the region. Developments underway within the North Point area will further enhance its prominence in the region.

The City of Alpharetta is poised to make North Point a major activity center in the Atlanta region. The City recently submitted an application to the ARC for funding under the LCI program to develop a detailed implementation plan for the North Point Activity Center (NPAC).

Due to current active development in the area, aggressive and timely action is required by both MARTA and local governments to secure the future TOD opportunity before it is eliminated by current development trends. It is imperative that a site for the MARTA station be designated as soon as possible even if its construction is several years in the future. This will allow developers to orient their development toward the station to create the most vibrant, walkable environment possible. Due to the quick pace of development in the area, the ability to secure land for the station and influence the surrounding development will likely be gone within the next 18 to 24 months, if immediate action is not taken.

Development of a TOD at North Point is a “win-win-win” opportunity for local governments, residents, employees, MARTA and the development community. The potential to extend rail transit to the North Point area and create a new, mixed use village center at the corner of Westside Parkway and Center Bridge Road will be a significant boon to the entire Alpharetta area and will:

- Ease traffic congestion;
- Provide mobility options to area employees and residents, increasing the attractiveness of Alpharetta to employers and home owners; and
- Increase the existing tax base by attracting new medium density development.