

October 5, 2010

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP IDEAS

At the September 22, 2010, Community Workshop attendees were given an opportunity to share their ideas about the study area's future at a series of focused breakout tables dedicated to different topics. Ideas could be expressed either verbally or by drawing on maps. The following is a summary of ideas that were discussed and includes both maps and text.

Please note that these ideas reflect public comments given at specific breakout tables. They have not been categorized by topic, nor are they endorsements of specific recommendations. All comments will be taken into consideration by the consultant team and City of Doraville as draft recommendations are developed.

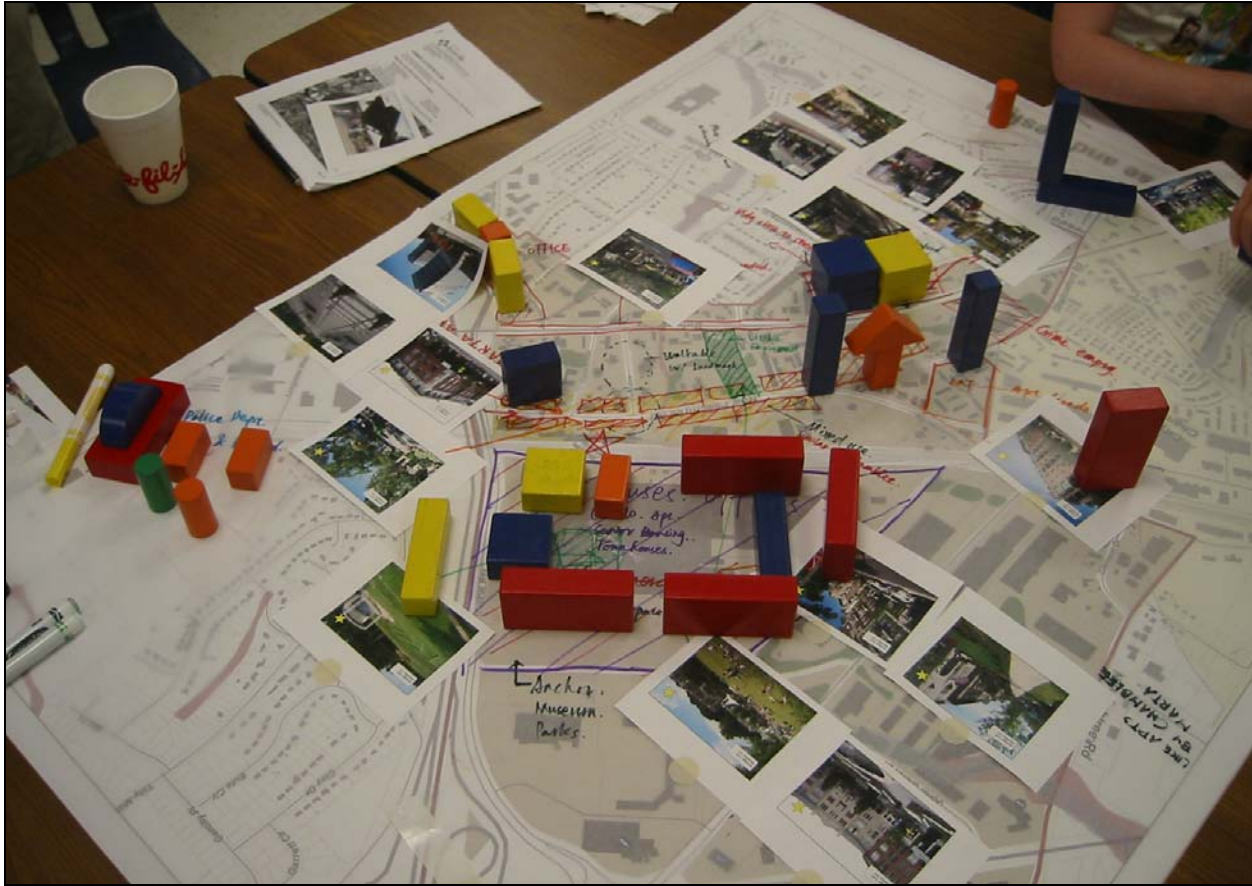
STUDY AREA-WIDE LAND USE AND DESIGN

- Make Buford Highway walkable/pedestrian friendly:
 - A median with trees can serve as pedestrian refuge for people crossing the highway
 - Improve streetscapes, change appearance
 - Continuous, safe sidewalks
 - Bring buildings closer to street when development/redevelopment happens
- Pine Tree Plaza should be improved as a mixed-use, pedestrian friendly area. Possibility with outdoor dining, trees, plazas.
 - Maximum 4-6 stories
- Encourage mixed-use development around MARTA station and downtown area:
 - Could be similar condo/apartment development as Chamblee has close to MARTA line
 - Maximum 6-10 stories building
- Create a walkable town center around Park and Central Avenues, and close to MARTA.
- Move the Police Department to the Tank Farm area north of the study area to free up land for civic spaces, open space, and public gathering spaces, and:
 - Maybe a new senior citizen center
 - Make Flowers Park visible and improve it with amenities
- Redevelop the two apartment sites as quality multifamily (condos or apartment).
- Possibilities for GM Site
 - Needs an anchor to serve as attraction/destination
 - A well-designed public space close to its entrance
 - Multiple uses range from housing, commercial to office
 - Multiple housing choices including townhomes, condos, apartments, senior housing, etc)
 - Maximum 6-10 stories
- Office development close to I-285 east of Buford Hwy.
- Break super blocks along Buford Highway, provide more connections to Northwoods neighborhood
- Make people feel safe.

Study Area-Wide Land Use and Design Table Map



Study Area-Wide Land Use and Design Table Block Exercise



MARTA/TRADITIONAL TOWN CENTER AREA

- Perhaps wooded area labeled Flowers Park could become a public park, although it might make more sense for redevelopment.
- Respect existing topography:
 - Locate a public amphitheater in the depression south of Park Avenue, relocate municipal buildings north of I-285.
 - Allow private development to take advantage of the existing hill on Central Avenue with residences that have skyline views. This new development could focus on a new square or small public space on top of the hill.
- An active district of restaurants or retail in 3-5 story buildings should be built along New Peachtree Road to greet those who arrive in the city by MARTA.
- Only a few buildings (indicated on map) are appropriate for preservation.
- Higher-density residential is most appropriate south of the town center area.
- High-rise office buildings might be appropriate along I-285.
- Buford Highway should be less of a barrier, it could be faced with mid-rise buildings
- Keep the existing swimming pool.
- We need a grocery store.
- Regional bike connections are important.
- Some development on MARTA property is feasible.
- Gateway features could help define and draw people into the redeveloped area.

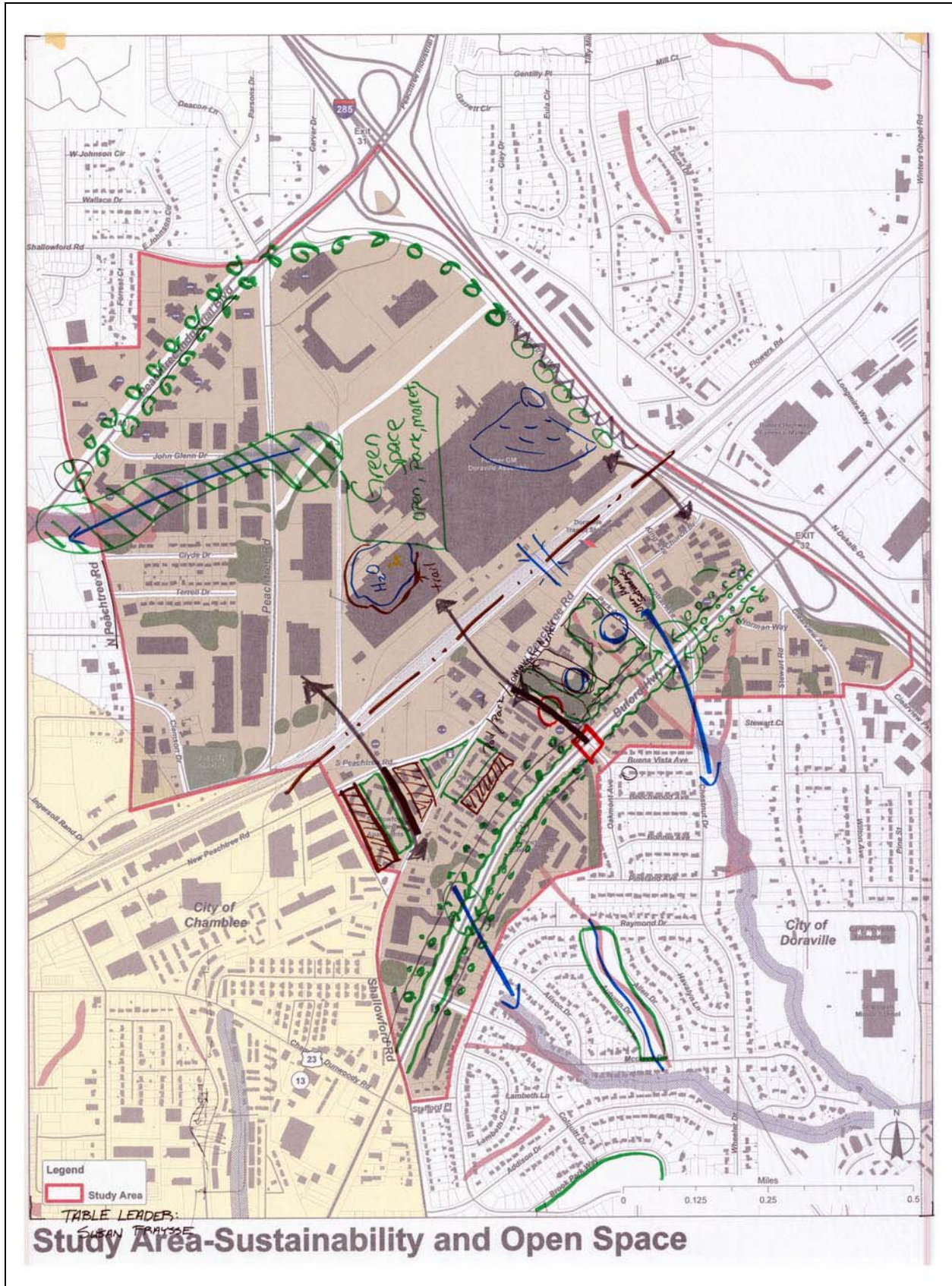
MARTA/Traditional Town Center Area Table Block Exercise



SUSTAINABILITY & OPEN SPACE

- Renovate and expand Flowers Park, and:
 - Provide better public access to the park.
 - Provide a new street between Buford Highway and New Peachtree Road along the southwest edge of Flowers Park. This street will improve access and safety.
 - Provide kid friendly spaces and activities.
 - Expand existing park area and incorporate into new town center.
 - Provide pedestrian friendly greenways connecting Flowers Park to other existing and proposed open spaces.
 - Refurbish existing city pool.
- Maximize permeability of GM redevelopment site:
 - Incorporate public green space into redevelopment plans.
 - Promote the use of sustainable storm water management (impervious pavers and bio-retention) to minimize downstream erosion and pollution.
 - Provide pedestrian friendly connections between parks, open space, and greenways.
- Include public parks and open space within redevelopment sites:
 - Redevelop existing lower density apartments such as Shallowford Gardens and Wynchase with higher densities to allow for the inclusion of parks and green space.
 - Provide playgrounds and other kid friendly amenities in parks.
- Provide location for “Saturday morning” farmer’s market.
- Plant street trees and develop streetscapes that encourage pedestrian circulation and allow for a safe interaction between vehicles and pedestrians.
- Provide an outdoor amphitheater with pedestrian access from downtown.
- Incorporate bio-retention features along Buford Highway and within parking lots along Buford Highway to promote sustainable storm water management and improve stream quality.

Sustainability & Open Space Table Map



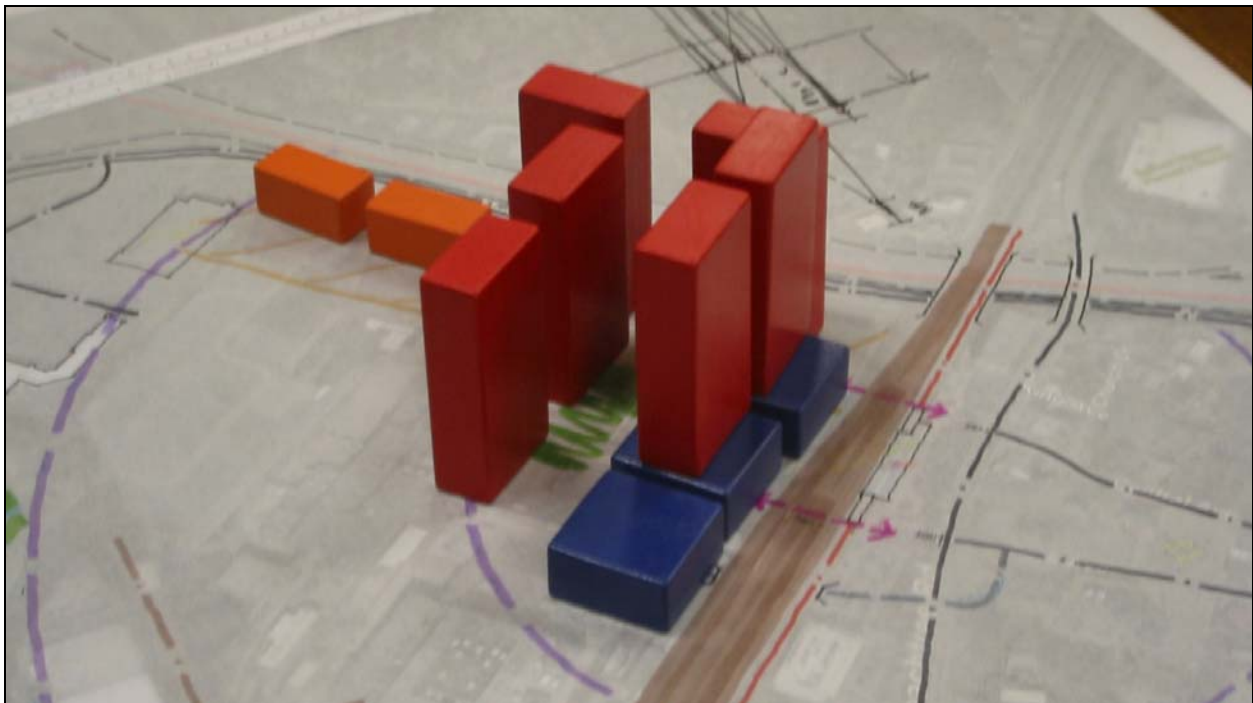
STUDY AREA-WIDE TRANSPORTATION

- Add pedestrian access to the redeveloped GM site
- Realign Chestnut Avenue with Park Avenue and the addition of a traffic signal
- Realign Clearview Avenue to Jesse Norman Way to remove traffic signal close to I-285 and Motor Industrial Way intersection
- Construct a larger radius ramp onto I-285 to accommodate the high traffic volumes (pending previous note is completed)
- Extend I-285 Exit ramp to Buford Highway from the east to Creston Drive. This would allow MARTA buses and tanker trucks to be routed directly to New Peachtree Road and not use Park Avenue, Central Avenue, and Longmire Way as cut thru routes.

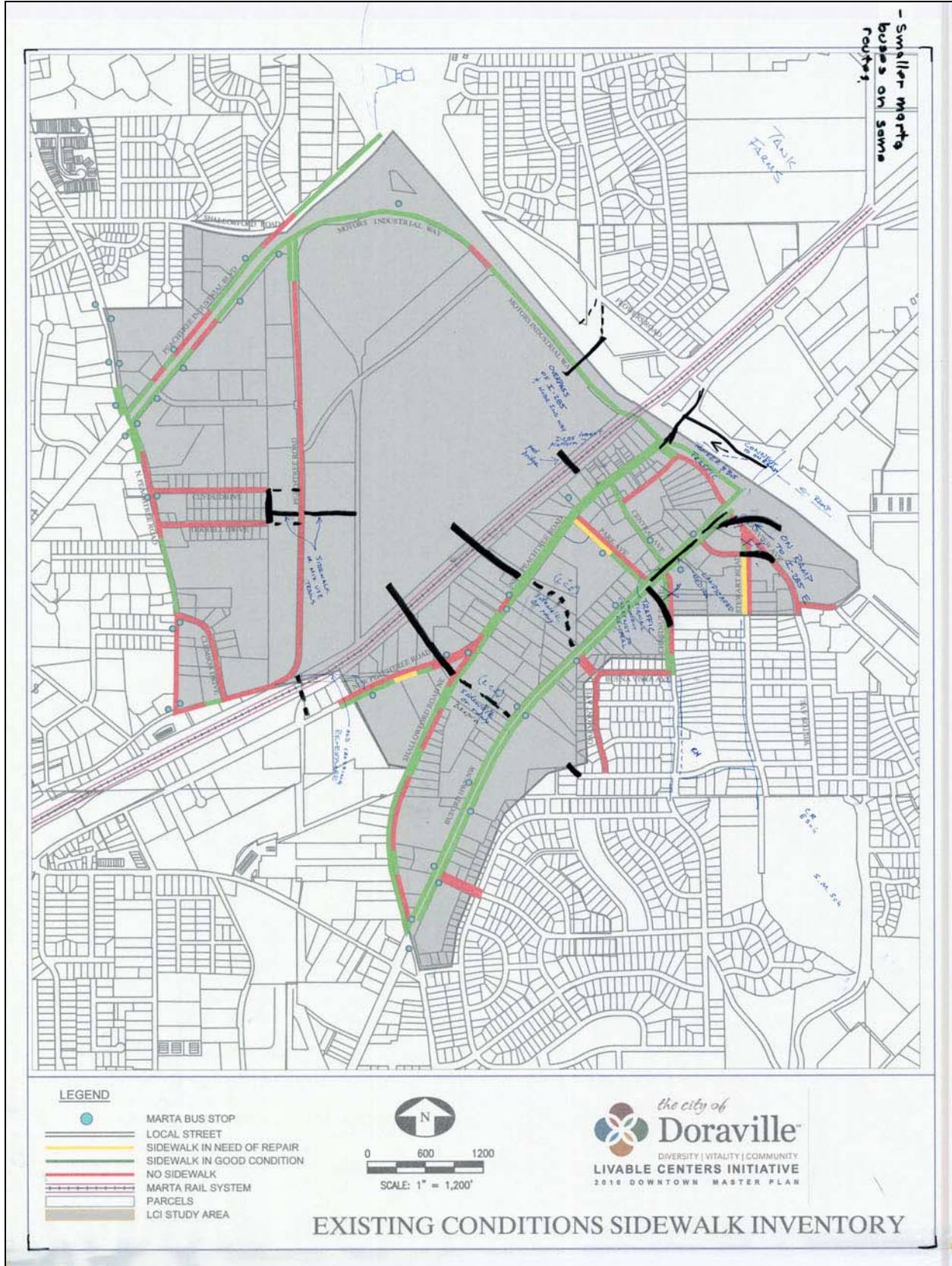
THE GENERAL MOTORS ASSEMBLY SITE

- Concentrate most pedestrian-oriented development near MARTA station.
 - Incorporate some sort of plaza or central open space in this area.
- Place tallest buildings near I-285, where they can have visibility from the highway.
- Create a linear park along Bubbling Creek.
- Improve connectivity between Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, the site, and Buford Highway:
 - Potential single-road from Peachtree Industrial via New Peachtree Road, across/under the tracks, then to Buford Highway
 - Realign North Peachtree Road at Buford Highway
 - Other potential linkages subject to engineering review (see scan on following pages)
- Incorporate an entrance to the west side of the existing station.
- Create a pedestrian bridge over the tracks in the vicinity of the MARTA station.
- Study if parking/service areas can be used to raise the street level to make it easier to bridge the railroad track with a street, but not in the same way that Atlantic Station did:
 - People do not like to park at Atlantic Station and the retail is struggling.
 - People like to park at the same level as the retail.

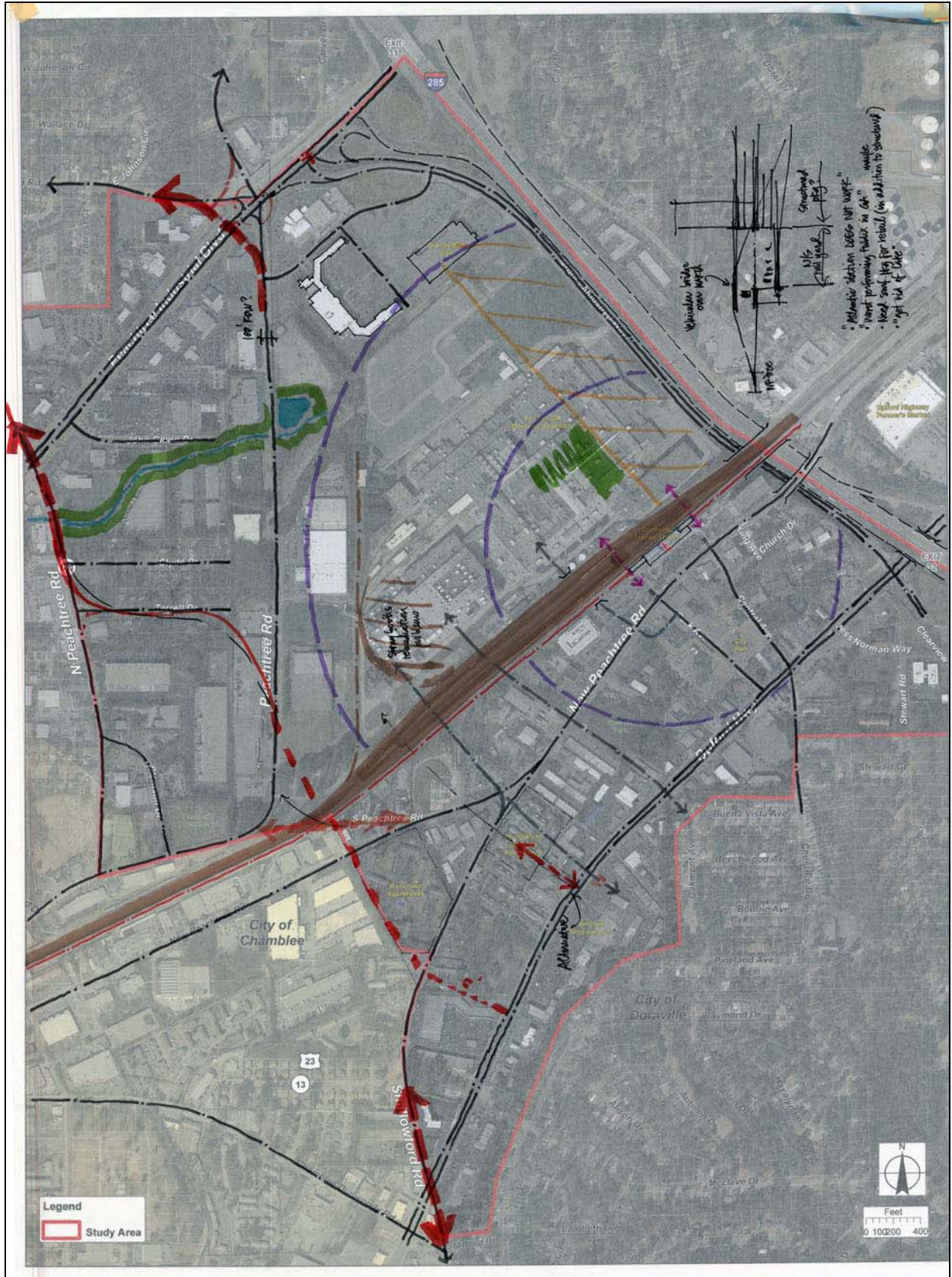
The General Motors Assembly Site Table Block Exercise



Study Area-Wide Transportation Table Map



The General Motors Assembly Site Table Map



MARKET AND ECONOMICS

How the Area Emerged

- There were heavy ethnic businesses that located here due to convenience, wholesalers & warehouses.
- These businesses began to move on to Buford Highway. Became an ethnic “hot spot” with similar businesses popping up.
- This led to long-term investment and speculation by ethnic business owners.
- Current excess retail space in study area is function more of changes in retailing with businesses either requiring larger building footprints, or moving out to denser population (Perimeter, North Lake, etc.)
- City’s new zoning laws prevent wholesalers, and uses are going down in property value.
- With so much current retail zoning, it will be a challenge to downzone the area to another, less valuable use.
- Currently, there is investment that wants to come here (particularly ethnic investors), but being held at arms reach by City and some residents. Inherent conflict here. New residents are ok with what we’ve become and have chosen to be here. Older residents saw what it once was and are unhappy with where we are.

Competitive Advantages

- High level of ethnic businesses and entrepreneurs has positioned Doraville as a destination for these types of businesses.
- Farmers Market, as well as other select uses, already have a regional draw.
- Location and access is better than anywhere in Atlanta (MARTA, I-285, proximity to 85). Value (business and residential investment) is better here than any other place within 285.

Create Sense of Place/Identity

- Doraville dominated by Buford Highway. No clear understanding that you are in Doraville, much less where it begins and ends. Chamblee businesses are fed from Peachtree (Buckhead, Brookhaven), have newer mixed use development and from a civic standpoint, is not as “distressed” as Doraville. Norcross has a historic area and beautiful homes creating a strong sense of place and community pride.
- Study area, and particularly Buford Highway, has no strong sense of place, making it more difficult to compete with nearby competitive markets (Chamblee, etc.)
- Needs different design in both public and private spaces. Light posts, banners, signage in multiple languages. Doraville needs to invest to enhance the public space. Keep what makes us special and competitive, but put “polish” on it.
- Economics won’t allow us to just gut traditional retail and start over, yet we can improve the environment to make it more marketable, competitive.
- Create a “Taste of Doraville” event focusing on ethnic foods, businesses, culture. Host regional soccer leagues/recreation events to bring people in.
- Position Doraville as a welcoming place, with a strong quality of life. Celebrate and promote diversity, family atmosphere. Don’t change what we are, but use it to our advantage. Present a “crisp and clean” image.
- Have to feature our “livability” in order to bring in new residents that will grow our community and help our businesses.
- Have to become a different kind of place than anything else in Atlanta in order to be successful, competitive. Cannot allow ourselves to become another suburban area that is just like all other places.
- Need to promote diversity and entrepreneurial spirit along Buford Highway, both to bring in outside business, but also to make stronger connection to area residents.

GM Vision

- Needs to be employment center. Size, access, land values, and current economy make it best for employment – Corporate headquarters, healthcare, bioscience, high technology. For example, Home Depot’s headquarters.
- Not suitable for residential (airport, current access, economy)
- Need “generators” like an entertainment complex. Sports, restaurants, concerts, etc.
- Site so big, people don’t appreciate challenge. People MUST get involved in vision rather than preventing anything based on preconceived notions. People must have vested interest if this is to become anything.
- GM needs to be brought more actively into the discussion.
- Should remain some type of industrial site – infrastructure/proximity/access already in place. Warehouse & distribution would be “perfect”, yet land may be too expensive. Question is whether industrial use will support the “value” that GM will demand.
- Needs anchor that is unique (not mall, etc) like headquarters, stadium, international college. Create a cluster based on unique uses (industry, CDC, college/education)
- Could it be a large park like Piedmont?

Other

- Create CID on Buford Highway to facilitate improvements, etc.
- GM site will be “driver”, but we MUST focus on Buford Highway. Not only can we have more control over this in the short-term, but it is where our “uniqueness” lies.
- Doraville will not magically evolve into Mayberry. We have to recognize it won’t develop in a more mainstream way.
- Local politics – City is trying to “destroy” our uniqueness, identity. Need more young and ethnic people to get involved here.