



NORTH BUCKHEAD CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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July 15, 2009

David Allman, Chairman
Buckhead Community Improvement District
3340 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 1640
Atlanta, GA 30326

Subject: Comprehensive Study Needed for Stratford Road Corridor

Dear David,

On May 18, 2009, the North Buckhead Civic Association (NBCA) Land Use and Zoning Committee recommended approval of the proposed rezoning of 3415 Stratford Road in part to C-3. This rezoning was required to resolve access issues for the Peachtree Corridor improvements. It was essentially in response to a solution that was available in the timeframe required to allow stimulus funding and that could be implemented with the available funding. The proposed solution is potentially temporary and may be redone in the future.

The area directly impacted by this rezoning is bounded by GA 400, Lenox Road, and Peachtree Road. Planned future developments include a hotel and condominium building on the west side of Stratford Road, the construction of the Northern Concourse of the Buckhead MARTA Station, the Alliance 3 tower and of course the development of the Margeson property itself. Issues for consideration include pedestrian connectivity, shuttle access, inter-parcel connectivity and maybe even a connection between Phipps Boulevard and Stratford Road to establish a grid. There is no evidence that these issues have been adequately considered.

In past years the BCID has made an important contribution to Buckhead by bringing together the stakeholders along Peachtree Road to assess the problems and opportunities within that important corridor. The result has been the highly successful Peachtree Corridor project. More recently, the needs of Piedmont Road were assessed and progress on that front is imminent. While the Stratford Road area is not as large as either of these other areas, given the limited connectivity along our part of Peachtree Road and given the current suspension of development activity, our association believes that it is timely for all stakeholders to undertake a serious assessment of that area's connectivity and development limitations and opportunities. Important transportation and pedestrian improvements are needed which would benefit not only property directly in the area in question but the surrounding neighborhoods as well. While the topography is challenging, it can undoubtedly be addressed with adequate engineering.

I am attaching a page from our association's July newsletter which explores this issue further. We would appreciate your organization's help in planning improvements in this area.

Sincerely,

[signed by]

Gordon Certain, President

Northern Concourse is coming, but more is needed

By Gordon Certain, NBCA President

In our October 2008 newsletter, we said “We understand that construction of the Northern Concourse will start later this year.” Well, it didn’t happen. The Northern Concourse is that pedestrian bridge planned to connect the Buckhead MARTA station to Stratford Road on the east and to Tower Place on the west.

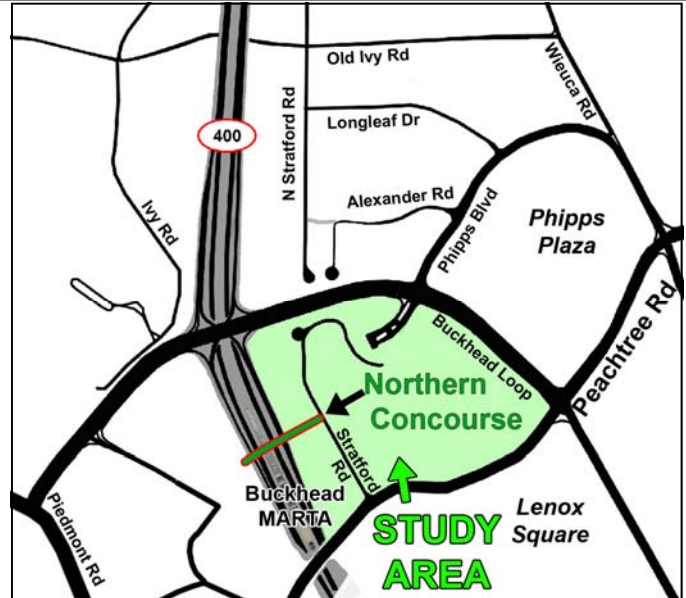
After more than ten years of waiting, we will have to wait longer, but at least the Northern Concourse is now fully funded, being designed and set to happen... eventually. The current estimate is that construction will start in 2011.

What does it mean to North Buckhead residents? Among other things, it means a potentially shorter walk to the Buckhead MARTA Station, should you want to do that.

However, there are still additional problems to be overcome before it will help. Currently, there’s no way to walk from Phipps Boulevard or Phipps Plaza to the location of the Northern Concourse without creating your own path through private property over sometimes rugged terrain or through parking decks and alleys. Even then, you may need to find an unlocked chain-link gate. Or, you could walk down to Peachtree Road on public sidewalks (the current path to MARTA) and skip the Northern Concourse entirely. This lack of connectivity affects more than MARTA passengers; it reduces the usefulness and safety of a large, valuable hunk of North Buckhead.

So, what’s the plan? As far as we can tell, there isn’t one. That prompted a late-June research mission by four NBCA board members: Walda Lavroff, Andrea Bennett, and myself, guided by Dieter Franz. Dieter, an environmental engineer, had amazing insights into how one might get from “here” to “there”. We walked through alleys and parking decks for several hours to establish to our satisfaction that with sufficient planning and the cooperation of key private landowners, new pedestrian footpaths and maybe new roads may be feasible in this area. Indeed, a limited street grid might be created with new roads to interconnect Stratford Road to Buckhead Loop and Phipps Boulevard, and possibly these latter roads to Peachtree Road. Many inter-parcel connections could also result.

Having satisfied ourselves that various connectivity routes are plausible (with sufficient planning and engineering), we will be asking the Buckhead Community Improvement District (BCID), our Buckhead urban area’s quasi-governmental improvement coordination entity,



Proposed Stratford Road vicinity pedestrian, vehicle and inter-parcel connectivity study area

to conduct a thorough study of connectivity in that area, involving all stakeholders. With this current quiet period in the development cycle, this may be the best (and last) opportunity to take on these connectivity issues.

We will keep you apprised of any progress made on these opportunities.

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