Medical Center Station: A Special Regional Destination Station

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Land Use and Zoning

Land Use

Commercial land use is the primary category of land use within a half mile radius of Medical Center Station at about 45%. The commercial development is primarily comprised of office parks. Not surprisingly, institutional uses make up the second largest category of land use at about 20%. This institutional use of land is comprised of what is called the “Pill Hill”, being Saint Joseph’s Hospital, Northside Hospital, and Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. All of which are within walking distance of the station and constitute the largest concentration of healthcare facilities in metro Atlanta. For more detail concerning the location of other land uses near the station, please refer to the land use map on page 4.

Zoning

The station area is included within the boundaries of several Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) studies that were completed in the early 2000’s. Of particular note is the 5-year update to the Perimeter LCI, released in 2005. The Perimeter LCI update gives special planning consideration to MARTA stations inside the study area. Specifically, the area around Medical Center station is designated by the plan as one of three “transit villages” in the Perimeter area and is envisioned as a “high-density mixed-use district”.

The MARTA station area and adjoining MARTA owned lands sit on the boarder of two adjoining counties (Fulton and DeKalb) and one recently incorporated city (Sandy Springs). The predominant zoning designation on the DeKalb County side is Office-Institutional (O-I), which allows for numerous uses, including office, and high density residential. Because of its location and existing conditions around the station, the most appropriate uses for the area would appear to be professional offices, health and medical service facilities, hotels, institutions of higher education and multifamily housing. Building heights up to five stories (70 feet) are permitted and can be exceeded through a special permit process.

Sandy Springs has its own version of O-I zoning and parcels on the Fulton County side of the half-mile station radius within Sandy Springs are predominantly zoned Office Institutional. Sandy Springs’ O-I designation is similar to that of DeKalb County and the same permitted uses generally apply. Building heights up to four stories are allowed (or 60 feet, whichever is higher) and can be exceeded under special conditions.

Special Regional Destination Station Typology Design Elements

As previously stated, Special Regional Destination station are many times atypical of conventional TOD design philosophy. This is due in great part because they tend to need a great deal of parking capacity. Below are some of the design themes of the Special Regional Destination Station typology. For more information on MARTA’s TOD guidelines, please refer to our website at http://www.itsmarta.com/TOD-real-estate.aspx.

Land Use Mix and Scale

- A regionally-significant public venue (sports or entertainment), campus (educational or medical), commercial or industrial complex, or airport. Usually not a mixed use setting.
- Scale varies with type of use; generally less dense and compact than typical TOD settings.
- To a degree feasible, ancillary development can help create a more integrated and welcoming environment.

Public Realm

- Large surface parking lots typical.
- Safe well-defined connections are key, but area-wide TOD streetscape may not be applicable.
- It is critical to conveniently distribute passengers to, from, and within the focal destination. In addition to high quality way-finding, the pedestrian environment may include tunnels, foot bridges, or moving sidewalks. If the key destination is some distance from the station, or is spread out rather than compact, local circulators or shuttles may be essential.
Generally MARTA makes land it owns around its stations (called “Joint Development” lands) available through a Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. Developers who are interested in developing at MARTA stations will need to go through a competitive RFP/RFQ process prior to contract award. All interested parties should periodically check the www.itsmarta.com website where future RFP’s/RFQ’s will be announced, or contact MARTA’s TOD and Joint Development staff at 1-404-848-5695.

MARTA owns +/- 17 acres at Medical Center. Medical Center is an existing MARTA TOD with the development of the Medical Center Office Tower in 2003. There roughly remains 10 acres that have development potential. There are two sites that offer relatively easy physical development and two that are more challenging. The image below and on the images on the side panel provide a development guide to the station area.

The first site of consideration is the +/- 2.5 acre bus loop area. Bus loops are normally an integral feature of a station; however, Medical Center is severely underserved by MARTA bus service. Currently, only one fulltime MARTA bus route serves the station and that route could possibly be re-routed to the nearby Dunwoody Station. This site’s size and frontage along Peachtree-Dunwoody Road is attractive and has recently garnered development interest. The next site of consideration is the +/- 2 acre parking lot and associated land to the rear of the St Joseph tower. The lot is partially fenced off from use. Access to this site can made by way of the internal street grid on the hospital compound.

The next two sites of consideration are undeveloped and located to the rear of the station in Dekalb County. Parcel 1 is +/- 2.5 acres in size and offers frontage along Lake Hearn Drive near the Perimeter Center Parkway overpass. Parcel 2 is +/- 3.3 acres in size. This parcel does not have direct access to an external roadway. A connection to this site could be made from the MARTA parking lot site to the west. Both of these parcels have site challenges because they are located in an area of moderate slopes and due to the presence of what appears to be a perennial stream.
ROUTES SERVING MEDICAL CENTER STATION

Route 25—Peachtree Industrial Blvd./Johnson Ferry Rd.
Route 148—Medical Center/Riveredge Pkwy. (Weekday Peak Hours Only)