

Technical Assistance Panel Implementation Strategy Report February 2010

Prepared for:



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ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIALS

- I. *Where the process started: Original Grant Application and Letters of Support*
- II. *Letter from a ULI TAP Sponsor: Lewis Reddick (Owner of Cici's Pizza to Go); The Importance of ULI*
- III. *MARTA TIP Funds Promised: Bus Stop Improvements Project, College Park to Receive \$236,000 to Bus Stop Improvements*
- IV. *Mary M. Bethune Elementary School: Participants and Impact*
- V. *Guy Loinger: International Connections*

SPONSOR ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ULI Atlanta would like to acknowledge all the Sponsors that made the College Park Technical Assistance Panel possible.

SPONSORS



City of College Park



McDonald's; 4 Rasul Enterprises;
Special Thanks to Bill
Rasul(Provided Lunch, Financial
Support)

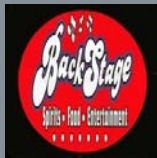


Old National Merchants Association

Fulton County



Wyndham Garden
Atlanta Airport Hotel
Special Thanks to Mr.
Fahim Shah (Venue,
Financial Support)



Backstage Restaurant and Lounge;
Special thanks to Mr. Joe Douglas
and Ms. Michelle Knight (Financial
Support)



Dream Maker Studios; Special
thanks to Rontario Bridges
(Financial Support)



Cici's Pizza to Go; Special thanks to
Lewis Reddick (Financial Support)



Kilroy's Package Store; Special
thanks to Mr. Jack Kurtz and
Mr. Michael O'Connor
(Financial Support)

Ms. Wanda Anderson (Financial Support)

Ms. Jamilah Stephens (Financial Support)

Mr. Don Winbush (Financial Support)

Mr. Gary Carlos Young (Financial Support)

Special Thanks to:

Claire McLeveighn; Hartsfield-Jackson
International Airport

Mary M. Bethune Elementary School; Special
thanks to Dr. Donna Austin and Patricia Knott-
Chapman

Guy Loinger; Sorbonne University, Paris
France

Julia Mulatinho Simoes (French language
translation services)

Obse Ababiya; Alliance Francaise Atlanta

PANEL & PROJECT STAFF

ULI Atlanta would like to thank the Panelists, Moderators, and TAP Committee members for their time, energy, and passion for ULI.

SPONSOR ATTENDEES

Gary Young – City of College Park

Don Winbush – Old National Merchants Association

PANELISTS

Aaron Ruffin on behalf of Michael Hightower – The Collaborative Firm

John Cheek – CNNA Architect

Chirayu Bhatt – HOK

Rukiya Eaddy – Atlanta Beltline, Inc.

Shepherd Long – Long Engineering

Winter Horvell – Foresite Group

Danielle Roney – Danielle Roney, LLC

Kenneth Wood – Planners and Engineers Collaborative

MODERATOR

Steve Cover – HOK

ULI ATLANTA TAP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ronnie Davis – DWH Strategic Advisors, LLC

Sarah Kirsch - RCLCO

Chris Hall – Haddow & Company

Jeff DuFresne – ULI Executive Director

Carmella Tuttle – ULI Director of Community Outreach

Barbra Bowers – ULI Atlanta Support Staff



Jeff DuFresne, Executive Director of ULI Atlanta gives opening remarks.

FOREWORD: OVERVIEW AND PANEL ASSIGNMENT

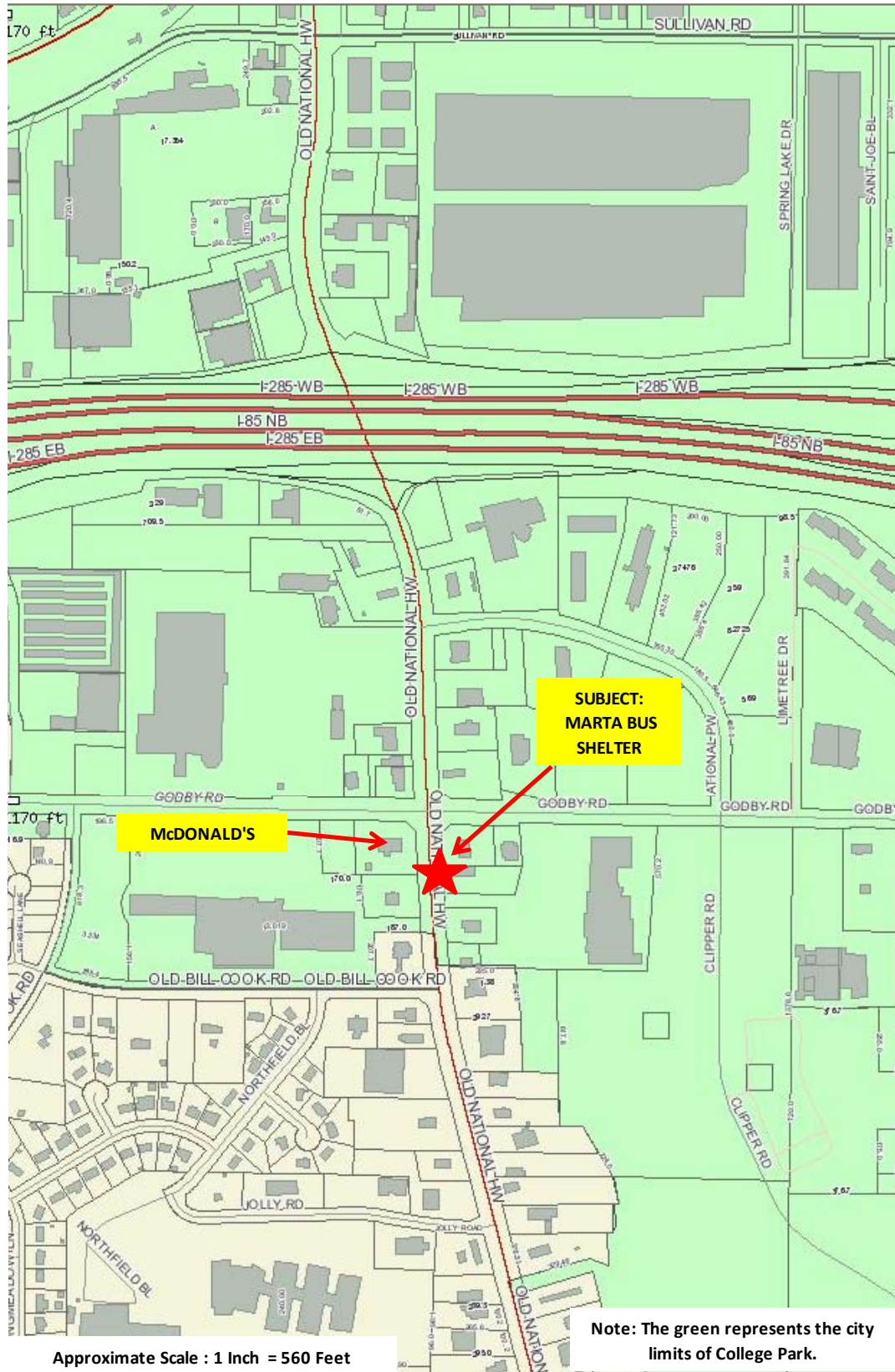
The Old National Improvements Committee (an improvements partnership between the City of College Park, Fulton County, and the Old National Merchants Association) asked ULI for guidance and direction in developing a design / build process for the bus shelter south of the intersection of Old National



Highway and Godby Road. The purpose was to establish a community-based process that can serve as a template for additional bus stop / shelter improvements along Old National Highway and a resource for other communities considering similar projects.

The MARTA bus stop on Old National Highway (to the south of the Godby Road intersection) provides an opportunity to set a standard for improving the aesthetics of the Old National Corridor.

The bus stop is not sized to accommodate the number of riders who board the bus at that intersection. There is not enough seating, the shelter is too small, and there is no landscaping. The trash cans cannot contain the amount of trash left behind while people wait for the bus.



It is the goal of the Old National improvements Committee that the improvement of the bus stop, through engaging the community in the design, funding and construction process, will:

1. become a tool for educating youth about the wide variety of professions that are involved in making transit and community improvements;
2. engage the business (private) sector in a civic project;
3. set a standard for improvements along the Old National Corridor ;
4. become a display space (and perhaps a sculptural piece) that encourages and promotes engagement in the arts;
5. introduce youth and adults to careers in the arts; careers in public / private sector organizations such as MARTA, the Urban Land Institute, city government, county government, and the design and planning professions; careers that are available and in demand in the Old National area;
6. be a branding opportunity allowing the community to develop a symbol / logo that will be used up and down the Old National Corridor to build the Old National brand and identity; and
7. develop a replicable process that can be used in any community to make transit and bus stops more appealing, build public / private partnerships, include the arts, and build a community brand
 - create a higher sense of pride in their community that will carry over to other community improvements
 - encourage pedestrian and transit use in the corridor that will increase activity in the area and result in a more vibrant business atmosphere

TAP OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the TAP was to provide the City of College Park, Fulton County and the Old National Merchants Association guidance and direction on developing a strategic plan for bus stop and bus shelter improvements. The intent was not to actually design improvements to the bus shelter, rather it was to establish a framework that can be used by the City of College Park as it embarks on this process. To assist with this planning effort, ULI convened a panel of experts in community relations, urban design, engineering, and public art. Key stakeholders, including MARTA representatives, local government officials, and community and business leaders, were also present to provide background information and input to the panelists. Other attendees included youth from local schools, who were an integral part of the discussion, asking questions regarding design and funding responsibilities.)The panel discussion focused on the community involvement phase, including participants who should be involved; a design and construction (not to be confused with the design-build delivery system) timeline; critical issues that require coordination among various entities; and the development of a process that can be replicated by other communities when contemplating bus stop improvements.

The panelists were asked to address four primary issues:

1. Identification of the best methods and processes for garnering community support, and recommendations on the optimal public/private partnership structure to move the project forward.
2. Consideration of aesthetic and practical issues in bus stop design.
3. Development of a process timeline--from concept to design and construction—for construction of the Godby Road MARTA shelter.
4. Formulation of an outline that can be used to create a more detailed *Improvements Process Guidelines* document that will give other communities the tools to replicate this program in their community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 22, 2009, the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Committee of ULI Atlanta, a district council of the Urban Land Institute, held a panel discussion to assist the Old National Improvements Committee in developing a design and construction process for the bus shelter south of the intersection of Old National corridor and Godby Road.

The Panel consisted of experts in community relations, urban design, engineering, and public art. Key stakeholders, including MARTA representatives, local government officials, and community and business leaders, were also present to provide background information and input to the panelists. Prior to beginning the day's discussion, the panelists took a bus tour of the Old National Highway corridor and performed a site inspection of the Godby Road MARTA shelter. The panelists also received a briefing book that provided background information on the Old National corridor, including excerpts from a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan completed for the area.

The day's activities were highlighted by two special events. Local school children from Mary M. Bethune Elementary observed the panel discussion and expressed their vision for how the Old National corridor could be improved. It was suggested that a Chick-fil-A restaurant be established along the corridor and that there be a more visible police presence in the area. The children were exposed to the various professions involved in community planning and design, which was a stated objective of the Old National Improvements Committee. The seed was planted for these students to understand the importance of community involvement and to know that their ideas and opinions count. This civics lesson is continuing in their social studies class.

Participants in the day's events were also fortunate to have a visit from Guy Loinger, a representative of the French government and urban planning professor at the Sorbonne University in Paris, France, who was visiting U.S. airports to learn about airport-related economic development efforts. He shared his insights about planning trends in France and observed the panel discussion.

The panel created a step-by-step process that College Park should follow as it undertakes improvements to the bus shelter. Critical to the process was obtaining meaningful public input, and specific groups that should be targeted for engagement were identified. In addition to targeting specific groups, engagement strategies were outlined by the panel in order to generate excitement about the project's potential and increase participation in the process. Aesthetic and practical issues of bus stop design were addressed. The panel emphasized the importance of recognizing budget constraints, as well as the costs of ongoing maintenance, as College Park considers different design concepts. Finally, the panel emphasized monitoring and recording the process from start to finish so that an *Improvements Process Guidelines* could be created for use by other communities.

PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Old National Improvements Committee wanted to address four key issues related to improving the bus shelter at the intersection of Old National Highway and Godby Road. The panelist recommendations for each issue are summarized below:

1. Identification of the best methods and processes for garnering community support and recommendations on the optimal public/private partnership structure to move the project forward.

Target Groups

The panelists identified the following groups as ones that should be specifically targeted for engagement in the community input process:

- MARTA ridership
- Surrounding businesses
- Old National Merchants Association
- Local Homeowner's Associations (HOA) (An umbrella group of 20 active HOA's in the area engaged in clean up last year)
- Old National Alliance
- Faith based community
- Various governmental jurisdictions
 - Georgia Department of Transportation
 - MARTA
 - Fulton County
 - College Park
- CBS Outdoor Advertising
- Public safety organizations
 - Police
 - City organizations.
- ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)
 - Disability council
- Atlanta Regional Commission
 - LCI
- Utility companies
 - Georgia Power
 - College Park Power
 - Water/sewer (College Park Public Works)

- Cable/phone
- Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport
- Artistic community
 - Fulton County Arts Council
 - Individual gallery owners
- Apartment associations
- Financial institutions
 - Bolster their Community Reinvestment Act
- Schools and PTAs (Parent Teacher Association)
- Nearby colleges and universities
- Doraville, Roswell and Lithonia (these communities have completed similar projects)
 - Best practices on unique shelter designs
- DeKalb County “Adopt-a-Shelter program”
 - Why they chose that standard design?
 - What were the advantages?

Engagement Strategies

In order to maximize participation in community design process, the following engagement strategies were recommended:

Road Map Process – In order to successfully engage a community, a road map must be established that clearly defines the necessary steps, goals and opportunities for community support.

Create Task Force – The Old National Initiative has already established an Aesthetics Task force which could be leveraged for this process. A Bus Shelter Task Force could be created with one delegate from each group identified above. The Bus Shelter Task Force would take its directives from the existing task force.

Ridership Surveys – The current MARTA ridership in the area must be surveyed to determine what they like and dislike about the current shelters. Do they feel safe? What would be a win for them? The survey must be short and focused to produce achievable results.

Livable Centers Initiative (LCI)– There is a wealth of information to be gleaned and structure to be used with the LCI. Task forces are up and running. The corridor has been divided up into zones and ambassadors from each zone have been identified. There have been initial discussions of desirable aesthetics, public safety options and a zoning overlay for Fulton County and College Park.

Public Input Meetings – People in the community are not able to take on much more. Meetings will be much more successful if they are well planned, with achievable goals and piggy back on existing meetings of PTAs and HOAs among others.

Child Art Design Competition – Engaging students through schools and other networks through an art competition could result in a shelter the community embraces as theirs. Work with Fulton County Arts Council for best practices on design competition requirements. The council could possibly offer opportunities for funding support or artist in residence services.

Identifying Groups as Resource Versus Stakeholder – The target group list should be examined and each group identified as either a resource or a stakeholder. Resources should be further broken out depending on whether they offer potential financial, physical or material resources.

Brickway Campaign – Creating a larger brick area around the new shelter could establish a cleaner feel and discourage littering. A brickway campaign allowing members of the community to purchase or design bricks could increase the community's sense of ownership over the shelter area and also discourage vandalism.

Overall Ownership – City of College Park will be receiving any available funding and should be the one driving the project forward. They will have to work with GDOT because Old National Highway is a state route and MARTA since they own and maintain the bus stop shelter. The County should be kept in the loop to stay in sync with the City. Many of the specific projects can be administered through the LCI Task Force Subcommittee outlined above.

2. Consideration of aesthetic and practical issues in bus stop design.

A critical issue that will determine the path ultimately taken by the City of College Park is the resources that are available for the bus shelter project, both financial and personnel wise. In terms of funding, the Old National Improvements Committee has grant money that must be spent by 2010, and the City Engineer may have some additional sources of funding for capital improvement projects. Whatever design program the City decides to adopt must obviously be practical in light of available resources.

Before aesthetic and practical issues of bus stop design were addressed by the panelists, they were provided with background information by a MARTA representative (Toni Thornton – Office of External Affairs). Much of the information provided by Ms. Thornton was in response to questions by the panelists. Below is a summary of her comments:

- The decision to build a bus shelter at a stop is typically based on ridership. Ridership is determined by MARTA's research & development department which uses human counts, Breeze card information and public input.
- MARTA is not responsible for any right-of-way acquisitions or for working with any Departments of Transportation on specific road requirements.

Standard MARTA Bus Shelters

- New bus shelters are built using a standard design throughout MARTA's service areas. CBS Outdoor Advertising manages the sale and use of advertising space on MARTA bus shelters and benches. CBS is ultimately responsible for the maintenance on all bus shelters. The maintenance schedule is based on weekly rotations in different service areas. Maintenance includes: trash pick-up, graffiti removal, replacing broken glass, painting, adhesive and other issues directly related with the shelter. There is a standard maintenance schedule, but work orders are required for more difficult jobs like broken benches and structural damage. MARTA has quality control measures, but very limited resources for enforcement.
- Using focus groups and a committee, MARTA recently completed the design of an updated bus shelter and is working on replacing older bus shelters with the new design, focusing on safety. All sides are transparent but still allow for side panel advertising. The advertising panels on the new design serve as the lighting mechanism as well.

Custom Bus Shelters

- Public input and special circumstances can result in getting a bus shelter built without meeting ridership requirements.
- Local municipalities have creative freedom over designing their own bus shelters. New designs and maintenance plans must be approved by MARTA. MARTA can assist in coordinating with CBS to obtain advertising and maintenance on custom shelter designs.
- Doraville has recently designed and approved custom bus shelters. The City of Roswell designed custom trash receptacles. The City of Lithonia has also designed a unique bus shelter. Each municipality has gone through its own process, but none have incorporated public art.

Based on this discussion, the City of College Park has two options to consider regarding the design of the bus shelter.

OPTION 1 (Recommended by the Panel)

This option is the standard MARTA bus shelter, with the opportunity for public art on the surrounding pad or on the panels of the bus shelter. This option may be attractive to the City of College Park due to limited resources and the ability to easily replicate this shelter along the corridor. The panel does not believe the benefits of the CBS advertising and maintenance agreement are compelling, especially given the maintenance concerns with the existing bus shelters in College Park. Local artists, school children, and neighborhood businesses should be engaged through an “Adopt-a-Shelter” or “Brickway Campaign” to design the shelters. This would bring the feel of community ownership and custom design to the shelter, while taking advantage of the standard MARTA frame. It is critical that the surrounding pad be improved in some way to complement all bus shelters along the corridor. The panel recommended that a public-private partnership between the City of College Park and the LCI task force be explored. The partnership could solicit funds and other resources from the community.

OPTION 2

The City of College Park could design a custom bus shelter to be replicated along the corridor. The biggest unknown of this approach is the capital outlay required. The City of College Park should study the experiences of municipalities such as Doraville, Roswell, and Lithonia which have undertaken a similar project.

Design Considerations

Sidewalks – The existing sidewalks are narrow and almost on top of the roadway. Some examination of the right-of-way and options for expansion behind the existing shelter will be necessary. Detailed streetscapes are available from B&E Jackson and Associates who are working on the existing sidewalk replacement project for the corridor. Current plans for sidewalk replacement include the replacement of existing bus shelters with new shelters from MARTA. The Project is scheduled to begin construction in six months (earliest possible timeframe).

Utility Company Assistance – Both Georgia Power Company and the City of College Park own power poles and electrical lines within the corridor. Georgia Power has expressed willingness to help in any way possible with the aesthetics around the bus shelters. Poles and wires could be moved or replaced during the planned sidewalk replacement project. This will require considerable coordination as many of the power poles also contain telephone and cable television lines that would also need to be moved with the poles.

Footprint Expansion/Paving – The dirt area around the back part of the bus shelter should be paved with concrete or brick pavers. An elevated seat retaining wall around the shelter is another option to define the boundaries of the shelter providing overflow seating and improve the aesthetics.

Lighting – More specifics are needed on the lighting systems of the new standard MARTA shelters. The sidewalk replacement project has details of lighting requirements for the corridor.

Advertising – If the City uses the standard MARTA shelter and opts for the CBS advertising panels, more information is needed on how each ad is chosen. The City would want some say over the types of ads that could be displayed throughout the corridor.

Public Art Option – With a custom shelter design there would be options for permanent art and rotating public art. Permanent art such as professionally designed unique shelters or long-term panel designs are typically more expensive than rotating art. With either the custom shelter or MARTA's standard design there would be an opportunity for some sort of rotating public art to be included on the panels. The Fulton County Arts Council has standardized methods of creating community panel teams and lists of vetted artists. They also provide information on the education process for public art campaigns. These types of community involvement have been shown to reduce vandalism.

Trash – The issue of trash around the shelters is extremely important. Neither the black vinyl immobile units nor the large blue mobile units are adequate to accommodate the volume of waste disposed. The group does not believe that CBS is fulfilling their requirement to MARTA.

Community Adopted Bus Shelter – Since none of the other groups responsible are maintaining the shelters, the City could consider community adopted shelters. One option would be to allow local businesses to advertise on the new shelters. This could be done subtly. Find more information on McDonald's picture program. These efforts could coordinate with local art options.

Physical Issues – The current sidewalk design does not mirror the walking pattern. The pad must be altered and a seat retaining wall possibility should be examined. Plans to expand the sidewalk already exist and all details are available through B&E Jackson and Associates.

Sidewalk Expansion Project – The bus shelter will have little impact on the sidewalk expansion project. However, the timing could be a problem if a newly designed shelter is required. The sidewalk expansion project currently includes plans to receive the new MARTA bus shelters after the sidewalk construction is complete. The lighting and utility pole location will also be affected. These updates should be considered if the project construction is scheduled to be completed before planning for the new shelters. If the City decides to simply update the standard MARTA shelter design, then the shelter pad will be the only point for discussion. The goal in keeping the bus shelter project separate is that the process could be taken and applied to situations where streetscape projects do not already exist. It appears that MARTA will build new shelters after the sidewalk project is complete. College Park must consider that they have 6 month to 12 months to get new bus shelters.

GDOT Plans – Old National Highway is scheduled to receive upgraded signal timing. The City of College Park and Fulton County have an agreement for streetscape, sidewalk, pedestrian lighting and pedestrian crossing improvements along the corridor. These improvements are currently scheduled to be complete in 2013.

Landscaping – More information is needed from MARTA on visibility requirements for landscaping around bus shelters. Street trees are not a part of the sidewalk expansion project.

3. *Development of a process timeline--from concept to design and construction—for improvements to the Godby Road MARTA bus shelter*

The following is a recommended timeline that the City of College Park and its partners should try to follow as they undertake improve to the bus shelter:

1. Existing LCI Task Force in Place (months 1 - 2)
 - Start with existing LCI Task Force and designate a new subcommittee
 - a. Separate Resources vs. Requirements (MONTH 1)
 - b. Evaluate Resources (MONTH 1)
 - i. A Youth Task Force Should be Established for Oversight
 - c. Establish Requirement – transportation and utilities requirements
 - d. Identify additional Subcommittee members - site architects and engineers, construction management and any utilities and transportation liaisons required through municipality.
2. Establish Vision and Limitations/Parameters (months 2 - 3)
 - Decide most feasible direction from Options: Custom, Standard, Standard w/ options
 - Decide Budget Parameters based on Financial Resources; including an artist stipend for design phase collaboration with community members.
 - Maintenance - identify community sponsorship options for maintenance agreements with roles and task requirements for sponsorship contract.
 - Determine site limitations and opportunities through stakeholders
3. Road Map (months 3 - 4)
 - Layout timeline for implementation including coordination with transportation and utility entities.
 - Assign duties with LCI subcommittee members for oversight of process.

4. Community Outreach – tagging group (months 4 - 5)
 - Provide two community information sessions to present project parameters, budget and sponsorship opportunities.
 - Facilitate community input regarding physical site needs and aesthetic/ cultural interests
5. Planning and Implementing Public Engagement Opportunities (months 5 - 6)
 - Present overarching community feedback from initial outreach
 - Identify Community/ Business Leaders as stakeholders in construction and service resources, maintenance and cultural programming
 - Identify a public art panel of 7 – 10 community members, government and business leaders
 - Utilize the Fulton County Arts Council’s Public Art Registry to identify appropriate artists for consideration in design phase planning and community collaborations
 - Present to Public Art Panel: Public artists for selection of design phase; selecting one award
 - Provide one public meeting to introduce artist and to finalize community input
6. Process Public Input and Make Recommendation (months 6 - 7)
 - Consolidate input sessions, artist selections and site requirements into recommendations document with consultation with all required transportation and utilities entities
7. Conceptual Design Process (months 7 - 8)
 - Hold design phase meetings with the site architects, engineers and public artist – with MARTA and public utilities – to develop a site plan and public art program approach based on community and municipality parameters
 - Community validation – Present design and art programming model in two community input sessions
 - Consolidate final recommendations based on community and Subcommittee feedback
 - Budget verification
 - Maintenance and Operations
 - a. Adopt-a-shelter – secure the identified maintenance partner for site
8. College Park makes final recommendation
9. College Park makes decision
10. Secure Funding

11. Design Implementation

- Artistic Design process – engage predetermined community arts program with selected artist

12. Monitoring and Oversight**4. *Formulation of an outline that can be used to create a more detailed Improvements Process Guidelines document that will give other communities the tools to replicate this program in their community.***

The panelists decided that the best approach for creating a detailed Improvements Process Guidelines is for the City of College Park and its partners to meticulously document all the steps involved in improving the MARTA bus shelter. The information could be organized according to the following categories:

- Public Input Process
- Budget Considerations
- Design Issues
- Maintenance Issues
- Construction Timeline
- Coordination with Other Agencies

The shape that this document will ultimately take will become clearer as College Park advances through the process.

COLLEGE PARK TAPS

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THE EXPERIENCE



Panelists at work



*Bethune Elementary Student
Participants Observing*



Ideas Generated and Maps



*Bethune Faculty and Parent
Participants*



*Bethune Beta Club Attendees with
Questions*



*Gary Young, Julia Mulatinho
Simoes and Guy Loinger*

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL PROGRAM

Since 1947 the Urban Land Institute (ULI) has harnessed the technical expertise of its members to help communities solve difficult land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. ULI Atlanta brought this same model of technical assistance to the Metropolitan Atlanta area. Local ULI members volunteer their time to serve on panels. In return, they are provided with a unique opportunity to share their skills and experience to improve their community.

Through Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs), ULI Atlanta is able to enhance community leadership, clarify community needs and assets, and advance land use policies that expand economic opportunity and maximize market potential.

For more information, contact:

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