

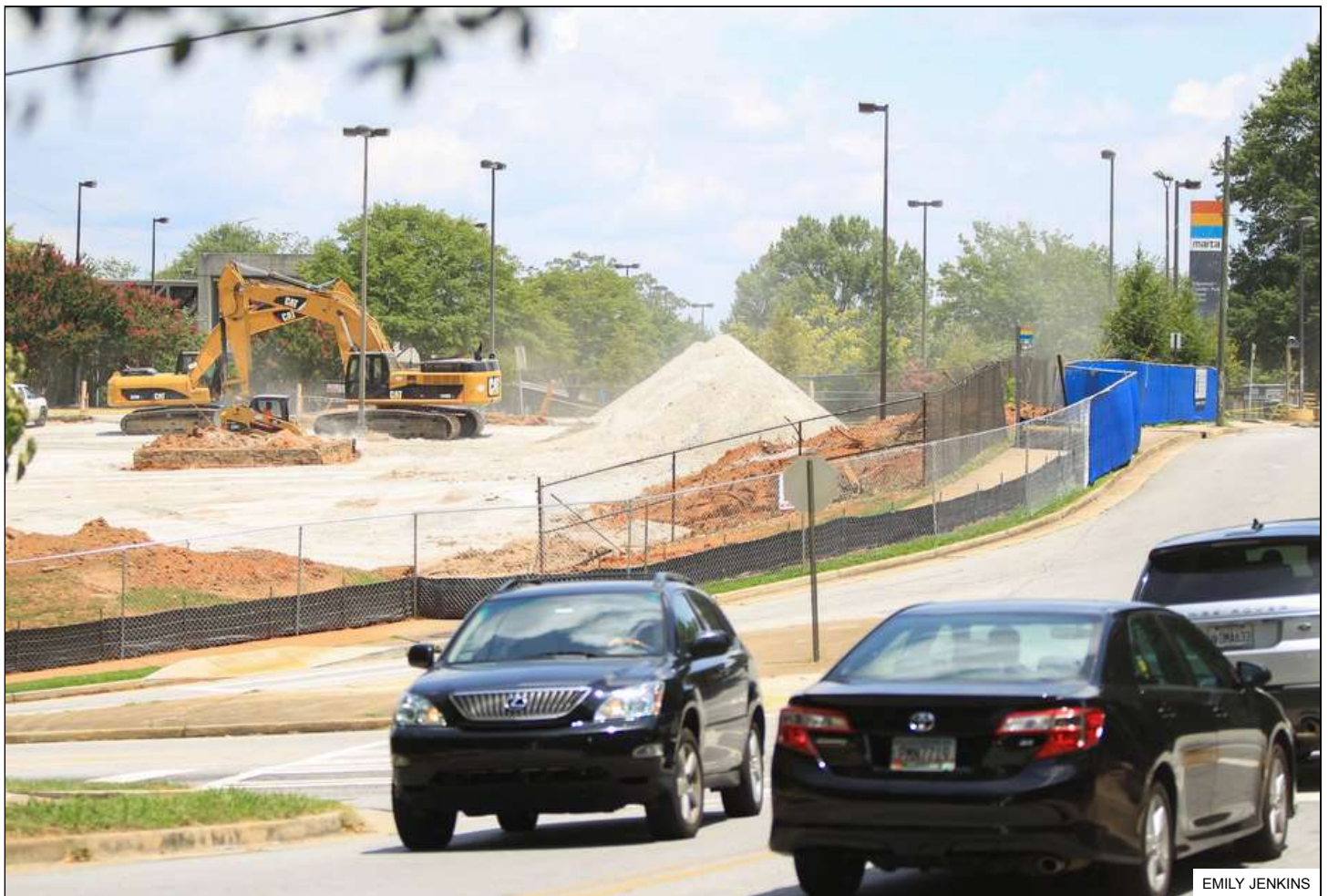
MARTA's 'Spoke' aims to boost ridership, revenue

BUSINESS

By **J. Scott Trubey** - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution



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EMILY JENKINS

Cars drive by the Edgewood/Candler Park Marta station, where construction on a new development was underway in late July. An Atlanta development group has started construction of the region's latest high-density development at a key MARTA station. EMILY JENKINS/ EJKENKINS@AJC.COM

Posted: 4:46 p.m. Monday, Aug. 22, 2016

MARTA and city of Atlanta leaders on Monday marked the start of the system's newest "transit-oriented development," the first of a series of new generation developments at its stations to boost ridership and drive urban development.

MARTA CEO Keith Parker said Spoke, the \$40 million privately-funded mixed-use development at the Edgewood/Candler Park station, reflects the system's re-invention and commitment to better service. Atlanta-based development firm Columbia Ventures will lease underused parking lots at the station and develop a mix of 224 apartments, retail, restaurants, a park and a performing arts center.

MARTA's transit-oriented development, or TOD, program aims to boost system ridership and revenue while reducing the impact of additional density on the region's streets. The office, retail and residential development around MARTA's Lindbergh station is the system's best-known prior example.

Others in various stages of planning are at its Arts Center, Chamblee, Brookhaven/Oglethorpe, King Memorial and Avondale stations.

MARTA's push for private-sector development at key stations comes as metro Atlanta businesses and many residents increasingly seek locations near transit. Spoke officially broke ground last month.



A rendering of Spoke, a transit-oriented development on MARTA land at the system's Edgewood/Candler Park station. Source: Columbia Ventures

Noel Khalil, co-founder of Columbia Ventures, said Spoke will be completed in about 15 months. Columbia is also the development partner with MARTA for the Avondale station mixed-use community, expected to open its first phase in 2018.

In November, city of Atlanta residents will vote on a half-cent sales tax to fund further expansion of the system. That vote could lead to other opportunities for MARTA to stimulate development near its stations, MARTA Chairman Robbie Ashe said.

"I won't ask you to vote for it today, but I will ask you to seriously consider (it)," Ashe said.



MARTA CEO Keith Parker speaks at the ceremonial groundbreaking for Spoke, the transit-oriented development at the Edgewood/Candler Park MARTA station. The ... [Read More](#)

Parker said other enhancements to train and bus service are in the offing, as well as a plan to replace the system's aging fleet of train cars over the next few years.

"MARTA will go from having one of the oldest fleets in the nation to one of the newest," Parker said.

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