Gateway Industrial Park is home to several key industries in Hart County, including Fenner-Dunlop, Ritz Transformers, TI Automotive, and CD Controls. Phase I of Gateway is jointly owned by the Joint Development Authority of Hart, Franklin, and Stephens Counties, while Phases II and III are owned by the Hart County Industrial Building Authority (IBA). All three phases are in development, are located with convenient access to I-85, and cover over 400 acres of land. The Hart County IBA and Hart County Government commissioned the Hart County Archway Partnership to assist with the planning and visioning process for Gateway to optimize use of undevelopable parts of the industrial park as greenspaces and walking trails for use by employees of the industries as well as local residents.

The visioning process began with a weekend design charrette facilitated by UGA’s Center for Community Design and Preservation in the College of Environment and Design. Fifteen graduate and undergraduate students and faculty advisors generated ideas and renderings around the idea of creating an eco-industrial park, a green approach incorporating shared outdoor spaces, natural areas, and walking trails in undevelopable areas of the industrial park to be shared by the businesses co-located in Gateway. The charrette was followed by planning work by a summer landscape architecture intern, who designed walking trails in Gateway Phases I and II as well as an enhanced entryway area for Phase I.

The students have worked closely with Hart County Economic Development Director Dwayne Dye, County Administrator Jon Caime, and Archway Professional Ilka McConnell. As Caime explains, Gateway “is being planned for its highest and best use to provide a multitude of uses that may not have normally been considered in similar developments. This has included commercial, industrial, as well as recreational and open space planning. The work of UGA and the Archway Partnership has been very beneficial in our planning and visioning of this area’s development.”

In Summer of 2012, landscape architecture graduate intern Megan Turner worked close with Caime to build upon the eco-industrial park concept and existing walking trail plans to develop a greenspace master plan for the three Gateway campuses. She designed comprehensive entryway, directional, and walking trail interpretive signage. Caime and Turner worked together on plans for an allee to be established as part of a road-widening project for the road connecting the properties. Echoing the eco-industrial theme, Turner suggested the idea of naming each of the campuses using nature-inspired local names: White Oak, Knox Bridge, and Shoal Creek. The master plan and recommendations were very well-received by the Hart County Board of Commissioners, and the allee designs will be implemented as part of road improvements later this year.

Advancing Community Priorities: Planning and visioning is a key priority identified for the Hart County Archway Partnership. Developing a vision and master plan for Gateway Industrial Park helps improve the environment for Hart County’s largest employers and also enhances business recruitment efforts, especially for targeted Western European companies who are accustomed to an emphasis on ecological preservation. Walking trails and greenspaces also increase recreational amenities for local residents.