



# South Peachtree Creek Trail

## Southern Study Area

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Prepared for: DeKalb County, GA  
Prepared by: PATH Foundation



DeKalb County  
GEORGIA

**KAIZEN**  
COLLABORATIVE

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FOUNDATION.org

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# South Peachtree Creek Trail

## Southern Study Area

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



August 5, 2022

# Acknowledgment

## *SPCT Southern Study Area - Working Group*

### *Dekalb County*

|                   |                                        |                          |                                           |
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| Rick Lemke        | Public Works Director                  | Walker Brown             | on behalf of Commissioner Rader           |
| David Flaherty    | Parks Division Manager                 | Ted Terry                | Super District 6 Commissioner             |
| Jennifer McLaurin | Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs | Kelly Cato               | on Behalf of Commissioner Terry           |
| Robert Patrick    | District 1 Commissioner                | Lorraine Cochran-Johnson | Super District 7 Commissioner             |
| Tara Smith        | on Behalf of Commissioner Patrick      | Leah Davis               | on Behalf of Commissioner Cochran-Johnson |

### *Other Major Stakeholders*

|                  |                                                                  |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christopher Beck | Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve,<br>President, Board of Directors |
| Jim McKenney     | Edens, Senior Vice President - Construction                      |

### *PATH Foundation*

|                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Greta deMayo    | Executive Director |
| Claire Kern     | Trail Planner      |
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### *Consultant Team*

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01

## Overview

## 01 Overview

This study has been divided into two sections: the Northern Study Area and the Southern Study Area (see map to the right). Through the planning efforts of these two studies, the PATH Team has identified opportunities for a regional trail system that will connect users from the Peachtree Creek Greenway in Brookhaven, to the future redevelopment at North DeKalb Mall. These facilities will allow users to safely cross major vehicular arteries and offer alternative connections to major commercial hubs, schools, and other existing parks. This report focuses on the Southern Study Area, which aims to extend the reach of the South Peachtree Creek Trail at Mason Mill Park to the new development at the North DeKalb Mall, as well as other destinations in the surrounding neighborhoods.



### Trail Study Process

The trail study process began with the organization of a working group to guide the PATH planning team. The PATH team then reviewed planning documents, performed extensive field research, and vetted preliminary findings with the working group and key stakeholders. The SPCT Southern Study incorporated input from the working group and the general public through public engagement meetings at key points in the six-month study process. Utilizing two public meetings with both in-person and virtual formats, community members and stakeholders had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the proposed trail alignment.

Once the data collection process and series of meetings were completed, the PATH team presented the final trail study findings to the working group. The final study report includes a preferred implementation phasing plan and a preliminary cost estimate for the 4.0 miles of planned multi-use trails and bike/pedestrian facilities that make up the southern study area.

### Working Group

Five meetings were held between PATH and the working group via zoom during the six-month process. The working group collaborated with the PATH team to establish the overall goals for the study, provide feedback towards preliminary findings, aid in public outreach, and review planning decisions. The updated findings of this study were circulated to collect feedback from the working group at the end of May, prior to the creation of this document.



*DeKalb County residents provide feedback and discuss preliminary findings and ideas with the PATH team after a public meeting presentation.*



*The residents of the SPCT southern study area provide feedback in the form of labels and comment cards to help inform the working group on future decisions.*

### Study Goal

After the working group was established, the members spent the first meeting establishing a goal for the project. The goal of the SPCT Southern Area Study is to develop a feasibility study for extending the South Peachtree Creek greenway from Medlock Park to North DeKalb Mall, while identifying spur connections to Laurel Ridge Elementary School and Little Creek Farm.

### Data Collection and Field Work

The PATH team used the goal of the study to initiate what data needed to be gathered. Using the Dekalb County GIS data, assessment of current and future planning and development efforts, as well as feedback from the working group, PATH's analysis of existing and proposed trail connections through Dekalb County focused on the following criteria:

- Feasible for construction
- Appeal to all users
- Safety of cyclists and pedestrians
- Connections to desirable destinations
- Connections to existing trails

Over a six-month period, the PATH team met the criteria above by reviewing collected planning documents, analyzing data, and by conducting field work in order to understand potential opportunities and challenges. While in the field, the PATH team identified additional trail opportunities, spur trails, and alternate routes. At the end of the data collection process, the PATH team worked to determine if the potential trail routes were feasible, appealing, safe, and served the goal of the study. The planning team's preliminary findings were then presented to the Working Group for their input and additional suggestions.

Develop a feasibility study for extending the South Peachtree Creek Greenway from Medlock Park to North DeKalb Mall, while identifying spur connections to Laurel Ridge Elementary School and Little Creek Farm.



*PATH kicks off the first South Peachtree Creek Trail Southern Study Area community meeting. Those in attendance included community members and leadership from Dekalb County.*

## Trail Types

Three types of trail facilities were identified from a multi-use trail perspective during the planning process to ensure the *South Peachtree Creek Trail* met the goals of being an inclusive, implementable, inspiring, interconnected, and engaging trail system. Multi-use greenway trails are the most desired trail type as they offer the highest quality connections for trail users. Where greenway trails are not feasible, this plan suggests buffered side paths, and neighborhood greenways.

### Greenway Trail

Greenway trails are trails used by all non-motorized travelers and are constructed in green areas such as parks, stream corridors, undeveloped land, etc. Greenway trails should be a minimum of 10 feet wide, hard surfaced, with design and construction specifications following the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) regulations.



*Greenway Trail Typical Section*



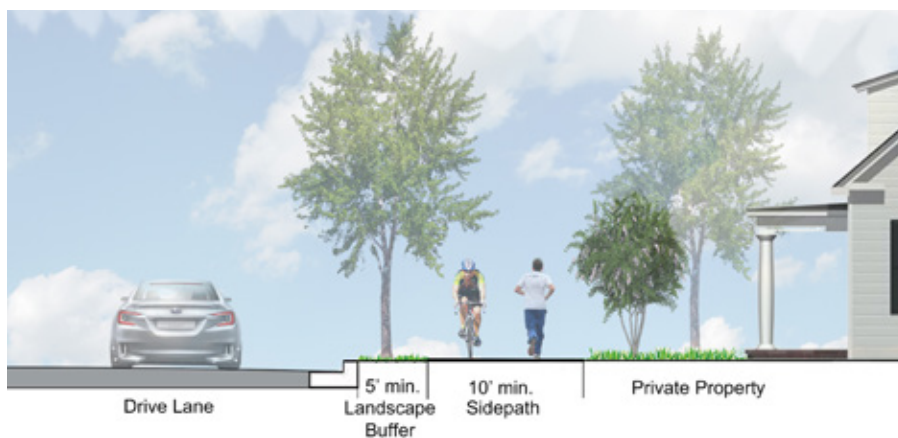
*Greenway Trail Example: South Peachtree Creek Trail under Clairmont Road*



*Greenway Trail Example: South Peachtree Creek Trail at Mason Mill Park*

### Buffered Side Path

Shared-use trails alongside roads in public right-of-way, or buffered side paths, offer an additional opportunity for making connections. Buffered side paths should be a minimum of 10 feet wide where a 12 foot wide trail cannot be achieved. A successful buffered side path should be clear of all vertical elements such as signs, fire hydrants, and water valves. Side paths should have a 5-foot minimum landscaped buffer from the roadway and on-street markings to alert drivers of the presence of bicycles and pedestrians.



*Side Path Typical Section: Residential Street*



*Buffered Side Path Example: Columbus , GA*



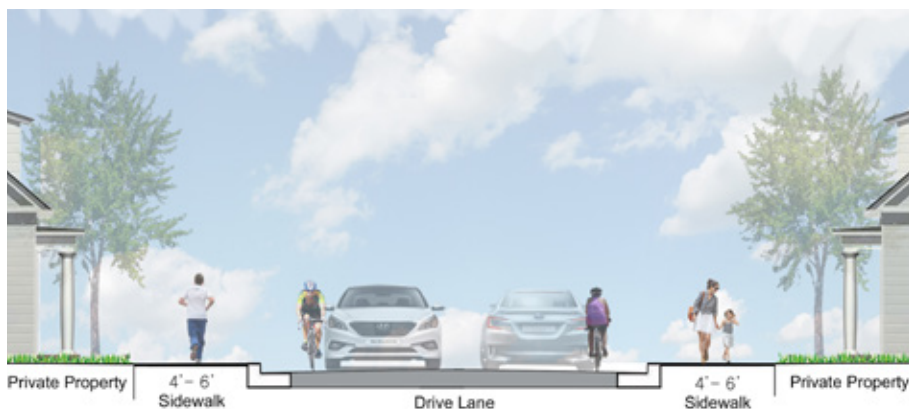
*Buffered Side Path Example: PATH Chastain, Atlanta, GA*

## Neighborhood Greenway

Neighborhood greenways are streets with low motorized traffic volume and speeds that are designed and designated to give bicyclists and pedestrians travel priority. Neighborhood greenways use signs, pavement markings, and speed/volume management measures to discourage through traffic of motor vehicles, thereby creating safe and convenient bicycle crossings on busy arterial streets.

Neighborhood greenways are only proposed when other more defined facilities are not feasible to make critical connections on the trail system. It is preferred that the street selected to become a neighborhood greenway has existing sidewalks or reason for a new sidewalk. Design treatments are grouped into measures that provide the following benefits:

- **Route Planning:** Strategic street closures for direct access to destinations
- **Signs and Pavement Markings:** Easy to find and to follow
- **Speed Management:** Curb extensions create a chicane for traffic calming
- **Volume Management:** Low or reduced motor vehicle volumes
- **Minor Street Crossings:** Minimal bicyclist delay
- **Major Street Crossings:** Safe and convenient crossings
- **Offset Crossings:** Clear and safe navigation
- **Green Infrastructure:** Enhancing environments



*Neighborhood Greenway Typical Section*



*Neighborhood greenway example showing traffic calming elements*



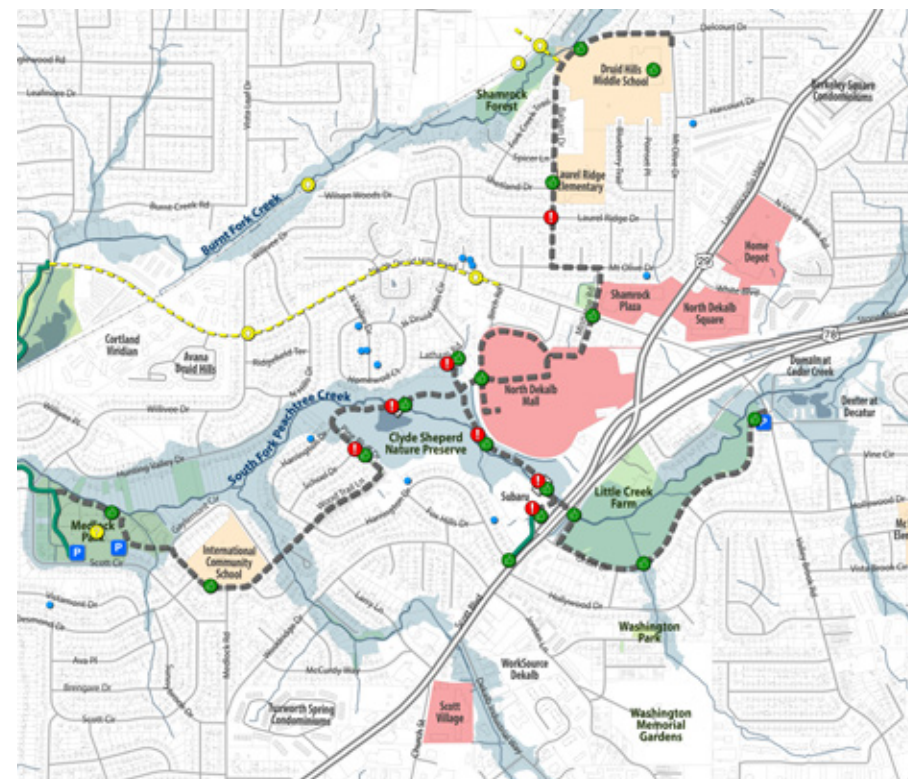
*Neighborhood greenway example showing limited vehicle entry while utilizing signage and pavement markings for cyclists.*

## Public Engagement

The PATH team and DeKalb County hosted two public meetings to collect feedback and suggestions on the preliminary findings of the trail study. The first public meeting was held in person on March 10th, 2022, at the AMC North Dekalb 16 movie theater in Decatur, Georgia. This open forum allowed attendees to talk with PATH team members, learn about the study goals, and curate multiple avenues for public input and feedback to be recorded. The goal of the first meeting was to collect people's reactions and identify additional connection opportunities through the public's suggestions.

The second meeting, held on May 11th, 2022, at the High Woods Auditorium in Chamblee, GA, focused on walking attendees through the preliminary findings and collecting additional feedback and comments. A live question and answer session, followed by an open house, allowed both virtual and in-person attendees the opportunity to ask questions, make comments and discuss the PATH Team's preliminary findings. This meeting was recorded and posted to DeKalb County's website, all feedback received from both meetings was then summarized and presented to the working group.

The map displayed on the right summarizes comments received from both public meetings. The map shows where attendees, varying levels of support or concern for certain elements of the study, and suggestions for connections both within and outside the study area. Specific connections, such as the connecting to Druid Hills Middle School received strong support, while the majority of concerns focused on the potential disturbance to existing green spaces and waterways. This input and feedback from the public helped shape the study to provide direct connections to desired destinations and neighborhoods.



### Legend

- Proposed Trail
- Suggested Connections
- SPC Trail
- "Where I Live"
- Parking
- Supportive
- Ideas/Suggestions
- Questions
- Concerns



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02

## SPCT Southern Area Study

# 02 South Peachtree Creek Trail Southern Area Study

## Overview

Based on the study goal established by the working group and extensive field research, the PATH Planning Team has identified 4.0 miles of multi-use trail and neighborhood connectivity opportunities that will help expand regional connectivity through DeKalb County and provide a safe and engaging trail network for future users.

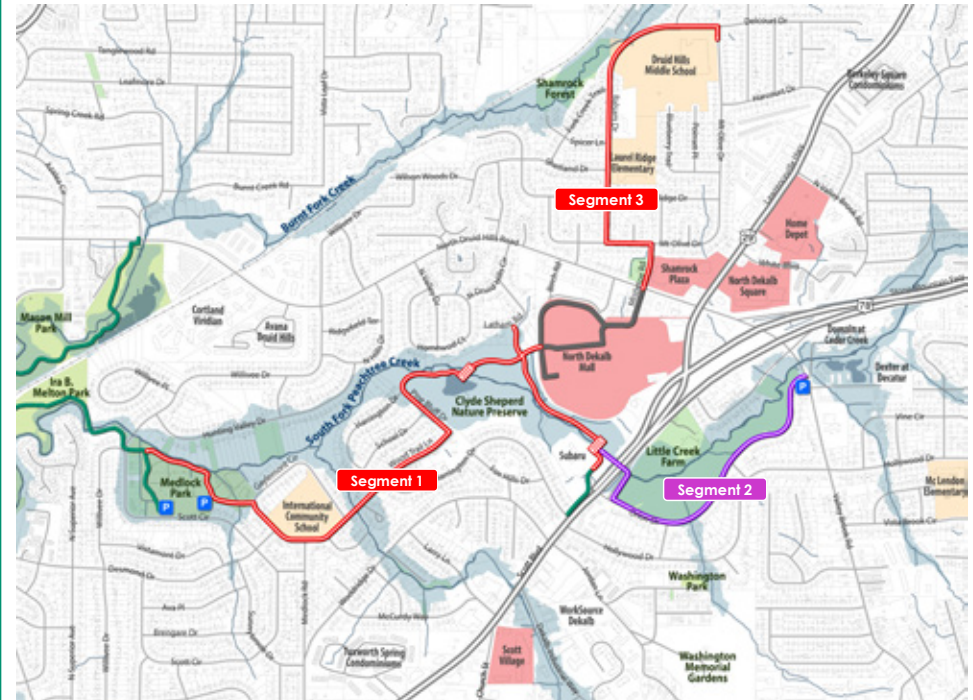
The development of the South Peachtree Creek Trail Southern Area offers DeKalb County residents access to a multitude of business centers, restaurants, and communities without the use of a car. This should be the fuel that keeps the momentum of this study going. The complete trail system will safely connect the many communities along the South Fork Peachtree Creek to parks, transit, local businesses, attractions, and regional connectivity networks such as Peachtree Creek Greenway, Atlanta BeltLine, the planned North Fork Peachtree Creek Greenway, and Gwinnett County trail system.

Within the overall study, the proposed route is divided into three (3) segments as listed below. The adjacent map shows the beginning and end of each segment. The following pages will present each trail segment in more detail, including opportunities as well as potential challenges that will likely affect decisions regarding the priority of implementation. A detailed map for each segment is included with existing images, as well as before and after vision graphics of selected locations along each proposed trail segment.

## Trail Segments

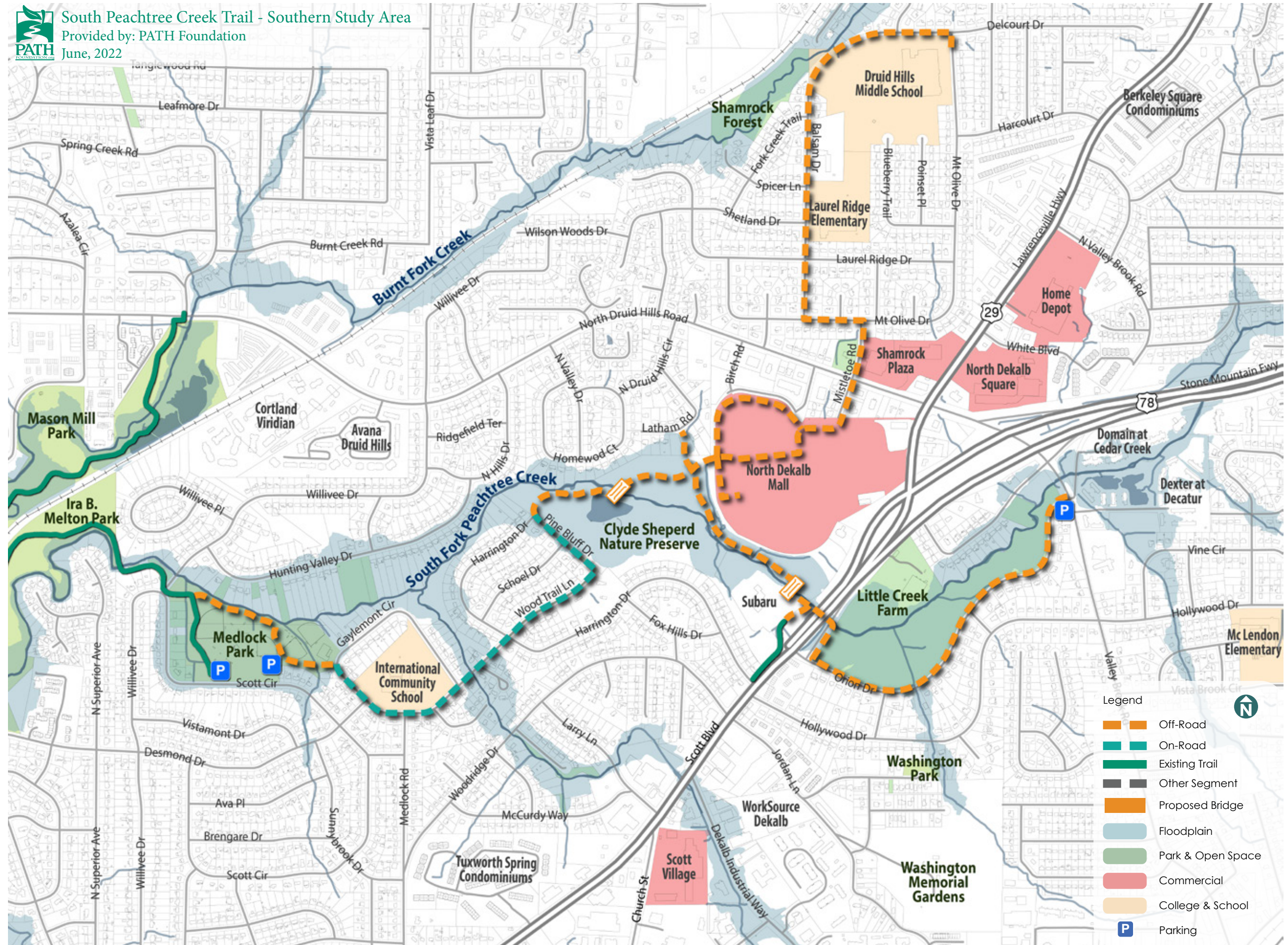
|                                                    |    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1   Medlock Park to North Dekalb Mall              | 14 |
| 2   Orion Drive Spur                               | 22 |
| 3   North Dekalb Mall to Druid Hills Middle School | 26 |

## Proposed Trail Segment Map





South Peachtree Creek Trail - Southern Study Area  
Provided by: PATH Foundation  
June, 2022



# Segment #1 | Medlock Park to North Dekalb Mall

## Description

Segment 1 begins as a greenway trail that stems off the existing South Peachtree Creek Trail from Mason Mill Park. This portion follows the creek via an existing sewer easement while threading through the ball fields of Medlock Park. The trail continues south of the International Community School along Gaylemont Circle as a neighborhood greenway where shared lane markings and sidewalk improvements delineate the trail along neighborhood streets with lower traffic volumes. Segment 1 continues along Wood Trail Lane as a Neighborhood Greenway that will bring users to the Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve at the corner of Wood Trail Lane and Pine Bluff Drive. Sidewalk improvements along Pinebluff aim to maintain the existing on-street parking for the Nature preserve.

At the corner of Pine Bluff Drive and Harrington Drive, segment 1 turns into the Nature preserve. The PATH Team has recommended a combination of greenway trail and as the trail circumnavigates the heart of the preserve in order to limit the trails environmental impact to the preserve's local ecosystem. Segment 1 will then cross the creek out of the preserve to the undeveloped parcel behind North DeKalb Mall. Two additional parcels along Latham Road have been identified for a neighborhood spur connection for residents who live in the neighborhoods off of North Valley Drive and North Druid Hills Circle.

The first terminal point of segment 1 will bring users to the future redevelopment of North DeKalb Mall. During this study, PATH Foundation met with a representative from the Edens Group to encourage the developer to incorporate multi-use trail facilities into the mall redevelopment master plan. The final leg of Segment 1 will continue following the creek towards Lawrenceville Highway. The trail will cross the creek in order to connect to an existing sidepath from Harrington Drive to the Subaru dealership driveway, which will provide additional trail access for the neighbors.

## Segment #1 Overview

**Connecting Destinations:** Medlock Park, International Community School, Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve, North DeKalb Mall Redevelopment

**Distance:** 10,680 Linear Feet (2.02 miles)

## Opportunities and Benefits

- Parking improvements at the entrance of Medlock Park
- Sidewalk improvements to fill gaps along Gaylemont Circle and Wood Trail Lane
- Trail connectivity to Clyde Shepherd Nature Preserve
- Medlock Area Neighborhoods will have a safe connection to North DeKalb Mall that will not require them to drive on either North Druid Hills Road or Lawrenceville Highway

## Potential Challenges

- A majority of this segment resides in the floodplain
- Public feedback for the Latham Road Connection indicated a 50/50 split between those in favor and those concerned about the trail's interaction with their neighborhood.

## Trail User Scenarios

- Parents and their children commuting to the International Community School
- Families walking to Medlock Park for Youth Sporting Events or to enjoy other park amenities.
- Residents can bike to and from the future businesses and services at the North DeKalb Mall redevelopment.



# SPCT Southern Study Area Segment #1





## Segment #1 | Existing Conditions



Existing conditions at the South Peachtree Creek where the proposed trail would connect, facing Northeast.



Existing sewer corridor along the South Peachtree Creek facing East.

## Segment #1 | Existing Conditions



Existing conditions where South Peachtree Creek runs into the north end of Medlock park, facing Southeast. The narrow conditions made this area not feasible to accommodate the proposed trail between the creek edge and the current sports fields.

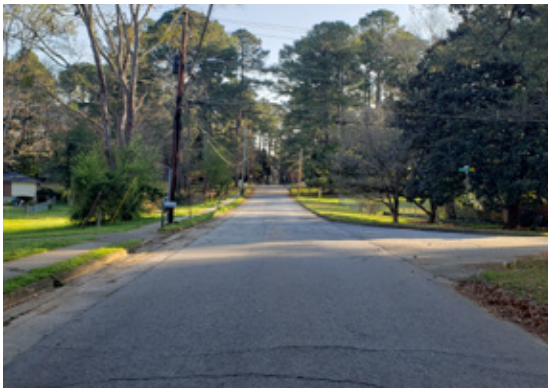


Existing conditions at the baseball fields in Medlock park, facing Southeast. In this area, a 12 foot wide multi-use trail with minimum 3 foot clearance on either side would fit.

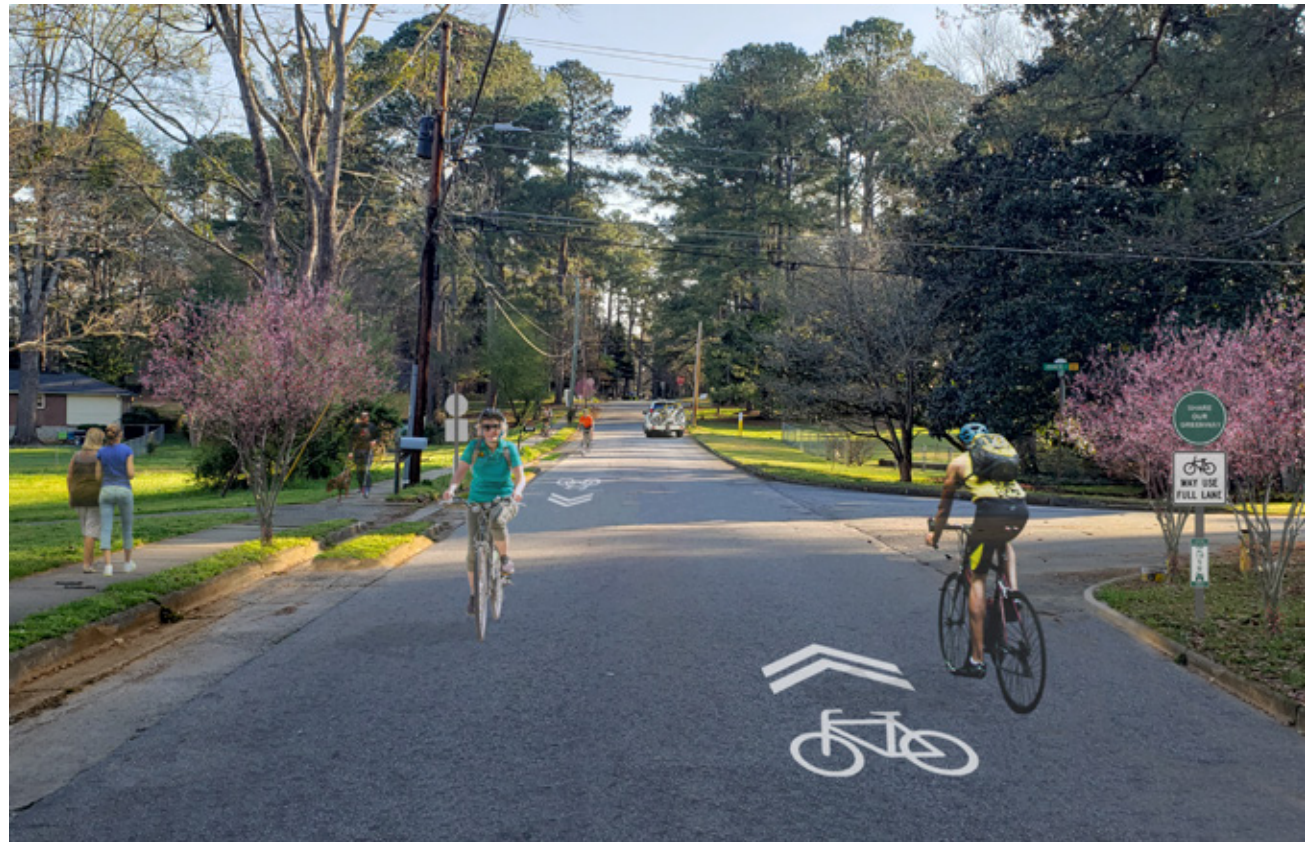


## Segment #1 | Proposed Neighborhood Greenway

The vision graphic below depicts Wood Trail Lane with the proposed neighborhood greenway delineation in place. By adding signage and street markings, cyclists and pedestrians can more equally share the road with vehicles.



Existing conditions at the intersection of Wood Trail Lane and Joiner Court facing Northeast.





## Segment #1 | Proposed Neighborhood Greenway

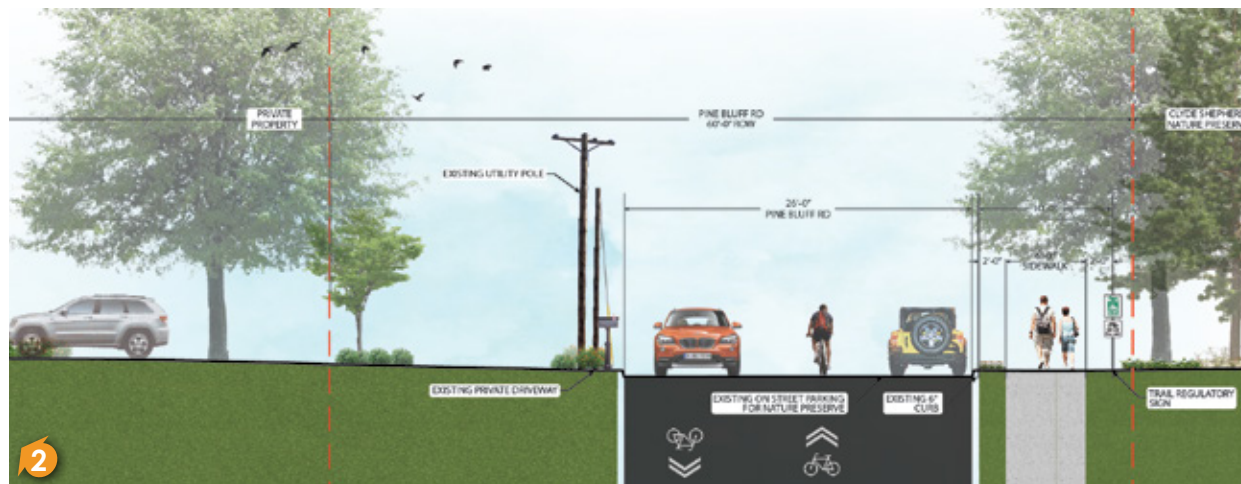
The cross sections below show the road layout of the proposed neighborhood greenway along the on-street portion of Segment #1. Both examples include new street markings, signage, and sidewalks. These additions will improve biker and pedestrian experience, as well as giving them a safer connection to Medlock park and the future North DeKalb Mall.



Existing conditions of Gaylemon Circle facing Northwest.



Existing conditions of Pine Bluff Drive facing Northwest.





## Segment #1 | Proposed Greenway Access

The vision graphic below depicts a greenway access point at Latham Road. This small spur would allow pedestrians and bicyclist from neighborhoods north of the creek to have safe and direct access to the proposed mainline trail.



Existing conditions at the bend before the dead end on Latham Road facing South.



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## Segment #2 | Orion Drive Spur

### Description

Segment 2 begins along the south side of the South Fork Peachtree Creek where segment 1 crosses the creek and ties to the existing sidepath along Orion Drive. Segment 2 begins as a greenway trail that offers the opportunity for a separate crossing that will bring users under Lawrenceville Highway. Once across this major vehicular artery, the trail transitions to a sidepath that circumnavigates Little Creek Farm along Orion Drive. This segment offers opportunities for scenic overlooks into horse pastures, trailhead parking, and connections to park improvements as identified in the Little Creek Farm Master Plan.

### Segment #2 Overview

**Connecting Destinations:** North DeKalb Mall, Little Creek Farm, Greater Valley Brook Neighborhood Area

**Distance:** 4,465 Linear Feet (0.85 miles)

### Opportunities and Benefits

- Separated trail crossing under Lawrenceville Highway
- Connections to Little Creek Farm improvements

### Potential Challenges

- Right-of-way availability along the north side of Orion Drive

### Trail User Scenarios

- Residents in the Greater Valley Brook area can safely cross the major vehicular artery and get to North DeKalb Mall with no need of a car.



## SPCT Southern Study Area Segment #2





## Segment #2 | Proposed Orion Drive Underpass

The vision graphic below depicts an underpass going below two major roads: Orion Drive and Lawrenceville Highway. Adding this underpass will allow people from the neighborhoods South of the creek to safely and quickly access the South Peachtree Creek Trail.



Existing conditions underneath the Orion Drive bridge facing South.





## Segment #2 | Proposed Orion Drive Trail

Graphic 1 shows the proposed cross section of the bridge replacement on Orion Drive to include a 12' wide sidepath and a 6' wide raised landscape planter for extra separation between trail users and vehicles. Coordination between the county and GDOT is critical to ensure the desired cross section can be incorporated into the new bridge design.

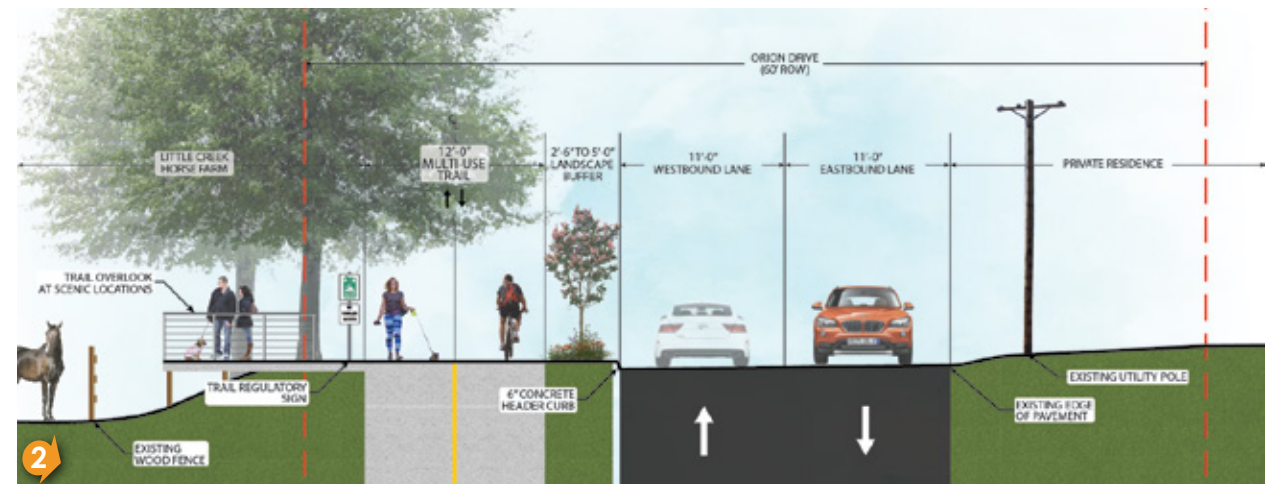
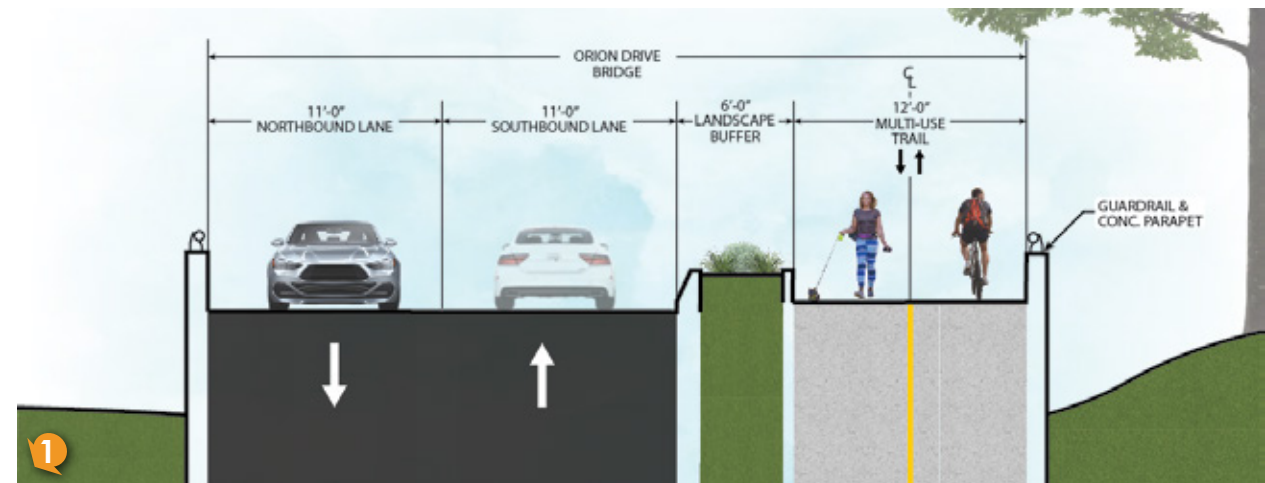
Graphic 2 shows the proposed sidepath along Orion Drive with potential lookout points to Little Creek Farm.



Existing conditions of the Orion Drive bridge facing South towards Lawrenceville Highway.



Existing conditions of Orion Drive facing Southeast.



# Segment #3 | North Dekalb Mall to Druid Hills Middle School

## Description

Segment 3 will allow users the opportunity to cross another major vehicular barrier at the intersection of Mistletoe Road and North Druid Hills Road. The trail will continue along the east side of Mistletoe as a sidepath and turn west on Mount Olive. This segment aims to create a safe, separated facility for cyclists and pedestrians to move freely through the Laurel Ridge Neighborhood Area, particularly during peak traffic hours. The sidepath then continues north along the east side of Balsam Drive. This segment will provide direct connections for parents and students to commute to school and link the north Laurel Ridge Shamrock residents to the trail network.

## Segment #3 Overview

**Connecting Destinations:** Druid Hills Middle School, Laurel Ridge Elementary School, Shamrock Plaza, North DeKalb Mall

**Distance:** 5,864 Linear Feet (1.11 miles)

## Opportunities and Benefits

- Bike and Pedestrian facility will help alleviate vehicular traffic during school drop-off and pick-up times
- Residents North of North Druid Hills will gain access to the trail network

## Potential Challenges

- Multiple private resident driveways along the existing right-of-way
- Trail will navigate a steep slope to bring users from Balsam Drive to Delcourt Drive

## Trail User Scenarios

- Parents and Students south of North Druid Hills Road have a dedicated crossing and access to get to school



# SPCT Southern Study Area Segment #3



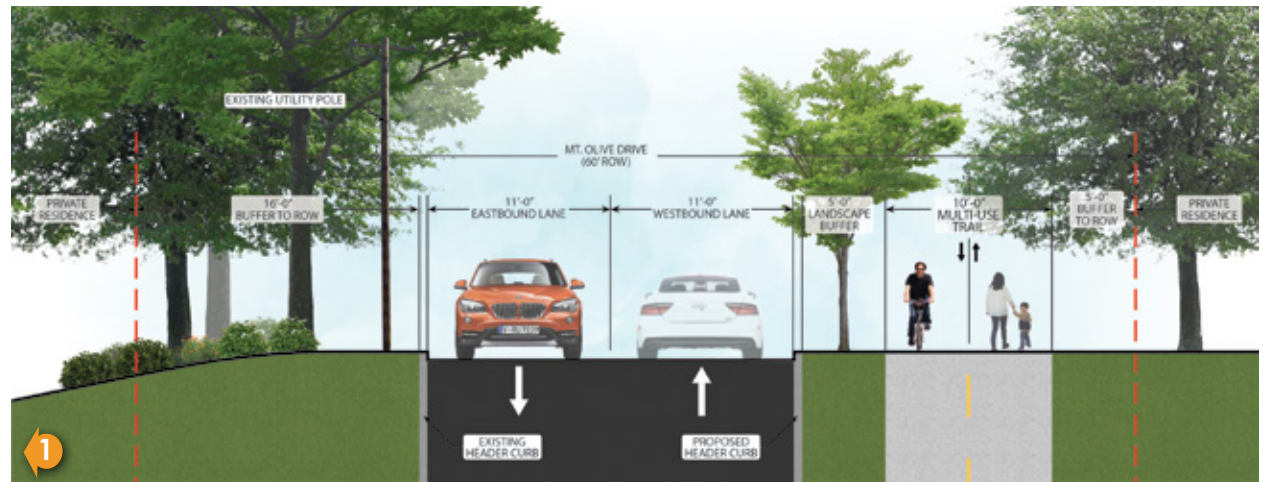


## Segment #3 | Proposed Neighborhood Sidepath

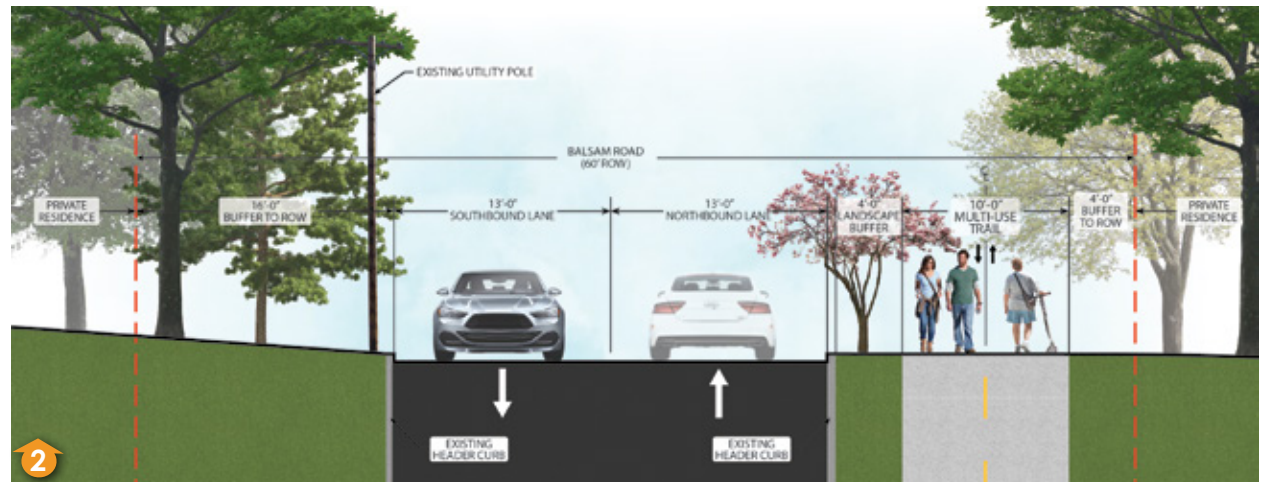
Graphic 1 and 2 shows how a 10 foot wide sidepath would be accommodated through residential streets where an existing standard sidewalk already is. The proposed sidepath will allow for much safer maneuverability for trail users through the Laurel Ridge community, while supporting Safe Routes to School to both Laurel Ridge Elementary and Druid Hills Middle School.



Existing conditions on Mount Olive Drive facing West.



Existing conditions on Balsam Road facing North.



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03

## Implementation Strategy

## 03 Implementation Strategy

### Implementation Priority

After meeting with the working group and the general public, the PATH team outlined the recommended the first segment to move forward to implementation of the study, as well as provide preliminary cost estimates for all three (3) segments.

Segment 1 was presented as the suggested project based on the selection criteria and support garnered from the public. This phase can act as a standalone project that brings recreational opportunities for residents, a safer commute to school, and will progress the study goal of creating a regionally connecting greenway. Segment 1 requires minimal acquisition and sets the stage for future connections across Lawrenceville Highway and North Druid Hills Road.

#### **Implementation Priority Criteria:**

- Connects desired destination
- Provides an inviting experience that will attract users
- Offers an ease for implementation

### Preliminary Cost Estimate

The chart on this page shows the cost estimate summary for each segment identified in this study. This preliminary cost estimate includes planning & engineering (P&E) and construction costs for the mainline trail. Easement and property acquisition costs are not included but should be considered prior to beginning implementation.

Estimated engineering cost includes cost for surveying, designing for construction, permitting, bidding, and construction administration of the project.

Estimated construction costs are based on material and labor pricing from spring 2022 using South Peachtree Creek Greenway trail standards. Those standards include an average of 12' wide concrete trail, landscape, structures and walls, trail amenities, and signage.

### Cost Summary

The total cost for implementation of the 4.0 miles of South Peachtree Creek Trail Southern Study is \$8.3M. The total cost for P&E is approximately \$491k, and the total cost for construction is estimated at \$7.8M

| Mileage    | Trail Implmentation Phases                                 | P&E              | Construction       | Total              |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 2.0        | Segment 1 - Medlock Park to North DeKalb Mall              | \$206,000        | \$4,246,000        | \$4,452,000        |
| 0.8        | Segment 2 - Orion Drive Spur                               | \$155,000        | \$1,993,000        | \$2,148,000        |
| 1.1        | Segment 3 - North DeKalb Mall to Druid Hills Middle School | \$130,000        | \$1,584,000        | \$1,714,000        |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Total</b>                                               | <b>\$491,000</b> | <b>\$7,823,000</b> | <b>\$8,314,000</b> |

## Recommended Segment for Priority Implementation: Segment #1



### ***Funding Strategy***

It is recommended that every effort be made to identify funding locally for developing initial trail phases rather than relying on funding from Washington or Atlanta. The use of federal/state funding can be programmed several years in advance for extending the initial phases of the system. A public-private partnership should be created to fund development and expedite delivery of trail segments. Here are funding sources to consider when trails are built:

#### ***Local Funding***

A variety of opportunities for local funding should be considered, including:

- Allocations within city/county budget
- Bond referendums
- Sales surtax generated fund
- Development impact fees
- In-kind products and services
- Philanthropic grants

#### ***State of Georgia Funding***

- Special project allocation
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)

### ***Federal Funding***

Federal grants and funding program opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle projects include:

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prioritizes and distributes federal transportation funding through the Regional Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Discretionary Grant Program (TIGER)
- Federal Transit Administration Capital Funds (FTA)
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program) (TA)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) through FHWA