

Public Hearing: YES ☒ NO ☐

Department: Planning & Sustainability

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): 1 and 7

Application of Director of Planning & Sustainability for a text amendment to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This application is intended to incorporate Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy document's general vision, policies, and goals as guidance for future development of the planned area.

PETITION NO: N1-2026-1098 TA-26-1248180

PROPOSED USE: Ch. 5: SAP – Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway

LOCATION: N/A

PARCEL NO. : N/A

INFO. CONTACT: Aprell King, Long Range Planner

PHONE NUMBER: 404-371-2155

PURPOSE:

Application of Director of Planning & Sustainability for a text amendment to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This application is intended to incorporate Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy document's general vision, policies, and goals as guidance for future development of the planned area.

RECOMMENDATION:

COMMUNITY COUNCIL: (August 2026) Full-cycle deferral.

PLANNING COMMISSION: (September 1, 2026) Pending.

PLANNING STAFF: (September 2026) Approval.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The applicant is seeking to adopt the *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* document's general vision, policies, and goals as guidance for future development of the planned area. Originating as an Arts & Culture small area plan within the Embry Hills & Presidential Parkway area, DeKalb County & Pond conducted targeted community engagement efforts that resulted in the expansion of the boundary area and scope. Based on the desires and needs captured by the community, the Arts & Culture-focused plan developed into a robust Small Area Plan focused on three pillars of focus: **Safer Streets, Accessible Open Space, and Catalytic Development** (through a placemaking lens). The boundary was expanded to include residential areas of Embry Hills and Northcrest to broaden the regional access footprint and ensure the plan encompassed a foundation representative of its designated Regional Center character area. Between February 2025 and May 2026, DeKalb County and Pond kicked off the master planning process which included the launch of a project website, interactive surveys, six “public” events, and numerous engagements with over 2,250 total community members reached in total. In addition to a ground-level community approach, the PMT worked very closely with Commissioner District 1 and Super Commissioner District 7 to ensure district and constituent needs alignment were represented. The *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* document also highlights a detailed planning and mobility framework – involving strategic stakeholder listening sessions – including linking neighborhoods through housing, trail and multi-use path connectivity, accessible green space, catalytic development, and safer streets

through urban design and placemaking. With a major goal being to identify a sense of place and identity for the area, listening sessions were held with local artists in the area and the plan includes strategic public art location recommendations and concept designs to aid in future implementation efforts. It also includes a phased action plan for implementing priority projects - with clearly defined roles and responsibilities - for policy, safe streets, open public space, and catalytic development projects. Adopting the *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* as an amendment to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans in DeKalb County's 2050 Unified Plan will enable the Planning & Sustainability Department – Long Range Division – to move forward with DeKalb County and the community's goal of creating a regionally-anchored, more connected, livable, and developable corridor in DeKalb County. Planning & Sustainability Staff recommends ***“Approval”***.

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: (September 1, 2026) Pending.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOTE/RECOMMENDATION: (August 2026) Full-Cycle Deferral (3-0-1) to allow the consultants to tweak the study and to consider suggestions from the Council which included: 1) Verifying whether certain included parcels are in incorporated DeKalb; 2) Adding traffic circles at Chamblee-Tucker Road and Alton Road; and at Chamblee Tucker Road and Embry Circle, near Buckeye Road.

Planning Commission Hearing Date: September 1, 2026
Board of Commissioners Hearing Date: September 24, 2026

STAFF ANALYSIS

CASE NO.:	TA-26-1248180	File ID #: 2026-1098
Address:	Embry Hills, Presidential Parkway, and Northcrest residential and commercial areas.	Commission Districts: 1 and 7
Request:	Application of Director of Planning & Sustainability for a text amendment to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This application is intended to incorporate Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy document's general vision, policies, and goals as guidance for future development of the planned area.	
Applicant/Agent:	DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability Director	
Existing Land Use:	There is a mixture of uses in the area, ranging from single family housing to multi-family apartments, to commercial, institutional, and industrial. Industrial and commercial areas are concentrated at the western edge of the district, bordering I-85. Higher density housing is concentrated to the east of I-285.	
Surrounding Properties:	See “Figure 7 – Current Land Use (Zoning)” in Draft <i>Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy</i> Final Report.	
Comprehensive Plan:	Designated as majority Regional Center and Town Center character area; future investment and a cohesive strategy for development is proposed in this region.	
Sections of the Zoning Ordinance Affected by the Amendment:	Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL.

The applicant is seeking to adopt the *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* document’s general vision, policies, and goals as guidance for future development of the planned area.

Originating as an Arts & Culture small area plan within the Embry Hills & Presidential Parkway area, DeKalb County & Pond conducted targeted community engagement efforts that resulted in the expansion of the boundary area and scope. Based on the desires and needs captured by the community, the Arts & Culture-focused plan developed into a robust Small Area Plan focused on three pillars of focus: **Safer Streets**, **Accessible Open Space**, and **Catalytic Development** (through a placemaking lens). The boundary was expanded to include residential areas of Embry Hills and Northcrest to broaden the regional access footprint and ensure the plan encompassed a foundation representative of its designated Regional Center character area.

Between February 2025 and May 2026, DeKalb County and Pond kicked off the master planning process which included the launch of a project website, interactive surveys, six “public” events, and numerous engagements with over 2,250 total community members reached in total. In addition to a ground-level community approach, the PMT worked very closely with Commissioner District 1 and Super Commissioner District 7 to ensure district and constituent needs alignment were represented. The *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* document also highlights a detailed planning and mobility framework – involving strategic stakeholder listening sessions – including linking neighborhoods through housing, trail and multi-use path connectivity, accessible green space, catalytic development, and safer streets through urban design and placemaking. With a major goal being to identify a sense of place and identity for the area, listening sessions were held with local artists in the area and the plan includes strategic public art location recommendations and concept designs to aid in future implementation efforts. It also includes a phased action plan for implementing priority projects - with clearly defined roles and responsibilities - for policy, safe streets, open public space, and catalytic development projects.

Adopting the *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* as an amendment to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans in DeKalb County’s 2050 Unified Plan will enable the Planning & Sustainability Department – Long Range Division – to move forward with DeKalb County and the community’s goal of creating a regionally-anchored, more connected, livable, and developable corridor in DeKalb County.

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA TO ADOPT EMBRY HILLS-PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY & SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES PLACEMAKING STRATEGY AND TO AMEND THE DEKALB COUNTY 2050 UNIFIED PLAN, CHAPTER 5, SMALL AREA PLANS, TO INCLUDE THE STUDY.

WHEREAS, DeKalb County recommended a supplemental land use and zoning framework for the Presidential Parkway Regional Center area within the 2050 Unified Plan, and recommended a small area plan study be conducted in support of these development expectations; and

WHEREAS, in February 2025, DeKalb County hired a consultant to conduct a small area plan study process, including extensive community engagement, to support the recommendations detailed in the 2050 Unified Plan, referred to as the *Presidential Parkway Regional Center*; and

WHEREAS, between March 2025 and May 2026, a diverse array of stakeholders participated in public meetings, workshops, and focus groups to contribute input on the goals and objectives of the study; and

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability department recognizes that the *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* aligns with the 2050 Unified Plan; and

WHEREAS, the *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* is considered to be an amendment to Chapter 5: Small Area Plans of the 2050 Unified Plan, offering additional guidance for the surrounding 2,635-acre area, which is designated as majority Regional Center and Town Center; and

WHEREAS, the *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* includes the following elements:

- Community Engagement Process

August 25, 2026

- Existing Conditions & Technical Analysis (Physical Conditions & Analysis, Past Plan Review, Needs and Opportunities)
- Plan Development (Land Use & Zoning Strategy, Transportation & Mobility Strategy, Placemaking Strategy, Catalytic Development)
- Project Deliverables (Implementation Plan, Draft & Final Report)

WHEREAS, in order to ensure consistency with the community and County's collective vision and policy recommendations, it is recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt the proposed *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* as an amendment to the 2050 Unified Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners:

- (1) hereby adopts the *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* dated August 24, 2026, and amends the 2050 Unified Plan, Chapter 5, Small Area Plans, to include this Plan; and the recommended policies and development standards contained in *Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy* provide specific guidelines to support the character areas of the Future Land Use Map of the 2050 Unified Plan and provide specific density/intensity guidelines.

August 25, 2026

APPROVED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this ____ day of _____, 2026.

CHAKIRA JOHNSON
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this ____ day of _____, 2026.

LORRAINE COCHRAN-JOHNSON
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

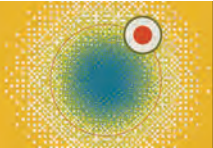
BARBARA SANDERS, CCC
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

JULIANA NJOKU
Director of Planning and Sustainability

TERRY G. PHILLIPS
Interim County Attorney



Embry Hills- Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy

Project Boundary



About the Plan

This study establishes an implementable vision for a more connected, livable, and developable corridor in DeKalb County. Anchored by key destinations such as Mercer University, ITP Training Academy, and surrounding neighborhoods. This plan aligns land use, mobility, housing, and open space to strengthen connectivity, improve quality of life, and unlock targeted reinvestment opportunities.

180+
survey responses

9
engagement events

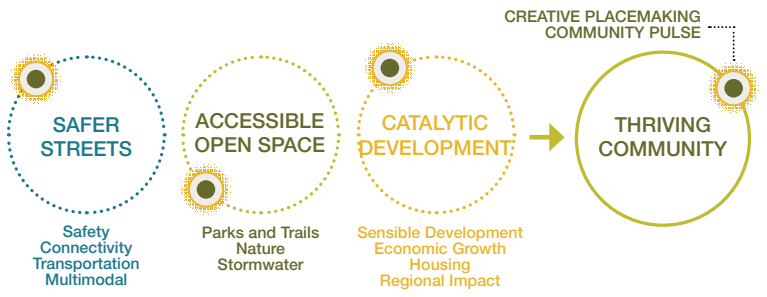
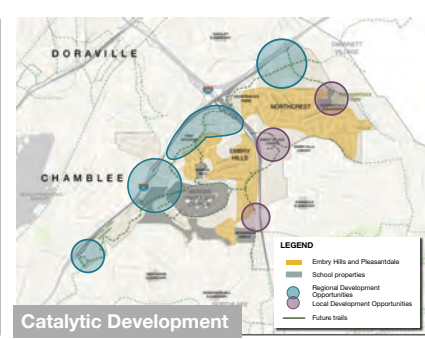
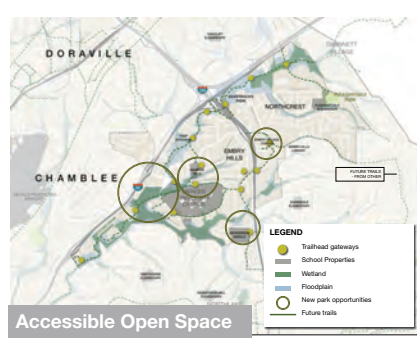
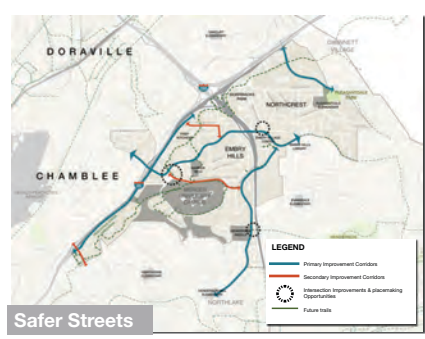
2,250+
total community members reached
(including website visitors)

1- Listening & Discovery

Past plan review, SWOT analysis, existing conditions study, community insight, and a regional history revealed characteristics of the area. The area's strategic location near major highways and regional destinations creates strong potential for connectivity and redevelopment. At the same time, physical barriers such as highway infrastructure, unbuildable land, and environmental constraints limit development opportunities and connectivity between neighborhoods. Balancing these factors will be critical to guiding thoughtful growth that enhances access, supports reinvestment, and strengthens the overall character of the area. **Extensive community engagement** from local businesses, community members, local artists & stakeholders informed the plan.

2- Redefining the Approach

Community-defined priorities were translated into a clear, actionable approach for the area. For safer streets, a Chamblee-Tucker traffic survey, roadway analysis, and network connectivity were reviewed to determine both the needs and priorities for the streets and intersections in the area. Open space review determined areas to preserve, new park opportunities, and open space placemaking opportunities. For catalytic development, regional development opportunities, local development opportunities, and neighborhood priorities were determined.



3- Integrated Analysis & Visioning

Comprehensive strategies for placemaking, public art, branding, and catalytic development were established. These interventions would both build the identity of the area and create a cohesive district. The community played a key role selecting Embry Village Shopping Center, the Mercer Intersection, and the Presidential PREP Parkway sites for catalytic development.

4- Implementation & Action

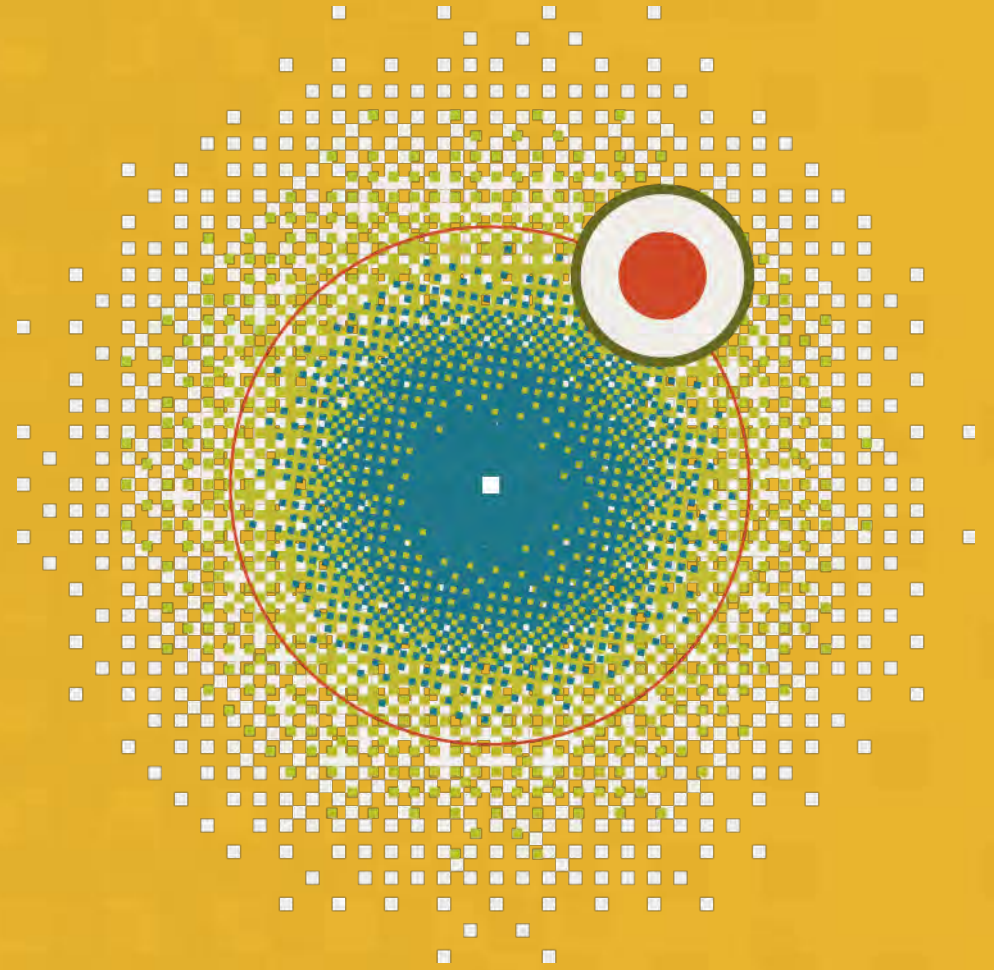
Strategies for accomplishing the framework, from phasing, project timelines, and partnerships needed were established. Performance metrics can help track the implementation and the impact on the community as the plan becomes a reality.



Embry village shopping center catalyst site rendering

Embry Hills - Presidential Parkway, & Surrounding Communities **Placemaking Strategy**

AUGUST 2026



The Study Area

The study area is in north-central DeKalb County, positioned between Doraville and Chamblee, Tucker and Northlake. This region has been shaped by the expansion of Atlanta's commuter corridors.

Situated at the interchange zone of I-85 / I- 285, the area functions as a key connector between Atlanta's urban core and its northeastern suburbs.

The study area is an established community known for its historic neighborhoods, local shopping centers, and proximity to the interstates I-85 and I-285.

Together, the Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway, and surrounding areas act as a transition between the denser urban neighborhoods closer to Atlanta and the northeast suburban landscape. Its role in the region is defined by connectivity, mid-century suburban character, and proximity to major commercial corridors, making it a desirable residential area with strong regional access.

Project Boundary



FIGURE 1 - CONTEXT MAP

PROJECT OVERVIEW

STUDY AREA



VISION + PURPOSE

Celebrate local culture, improve connections, and protect community identity through public art and placemaking.

PROJECT GOALS

1. Create a Unique Identity

Establish a bold, recognizable brand that reflects the character of the study area as a cultural destination.

2. Celebrate Arts & Culture

Elevate local stories and voices through public art, cultural programming, and artistic engagement.

3. Enhance Placemaking

Transform underutilized spaces into vibrant, people-centered places that invite gathering, activity, and creativity.

4. Improve Connectivity & Mobility

Strengthen safe, walkable, and multimodal connections between neighborhoods, trails, and transit to support access for all.

5. Livable Communities

Prioritizing high quality housing while preserving historic neighborhoods and local character.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATE



TOP FINDINGS

- Public Spaces: Parks, trails, and amenities are top favored amenities for the area
- Better connectivity needed: especially bike and pedestrian facilities
- Highlight the community around the study area.
- Public art installations are key priorities
- Preserve open space areas
- Highlight key destination areas: PREP Kitchen, Mercer, etc. valuable assets
- Connections to schools needed



Project Framework



Safer Streets Framework

The Safer Streets strategy was developed through a focused analysis of roadway conditions, multimodal needs, and key connections along the corridor. By combining traffic data, transit considerations, intersection improvements, and trail integration, it identifies targeted opportunities to create safer, more connected, and people-centered streets.



Safer Streets - Strategy 1

The four primary intersections identified have vastly different recommendations depending on the needs. This plan identifies what is needed to fix each primary road and describes steps to implementation in the implementation chapter.

1.1 CHAMBLEE-TUCKER ROAD

Multi-modal streetscape improvements to improve travel for drivers, pedestrians, and transit riders.

1.2 HENDERSON MILL ROAD

A comfortable pedestrian experience through wider ADA sidewalks, placemaking, and public art.

1.3 PLEASANTDALE ROAD

Safe street enhancements through placemaking and pedestrian-oriented installations.

1.4 PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY

Placemaking and urban development standards for a more attractive and welcoming frontage road experience with fully connected sidewalks.

FIGURE 29 - MAIN STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY



Accessible Open Space Framework

The Accessible Open Space strategy focuses on expanding and connecting green space to better serve the community while responding to existing environmental constraints. By addressing gaps in neighborhood park access, leveraging underutilized areas within floodplains, and creating new trailheads, the strategy promotes equitable access to open space and preserves the natural character of the region.



Areas to Preserve - Strategy 1

FIGURE 32 - PRESERVATION STRATEGY

- FLOODPLAIN
- WETLANDS

The public revealed preserving nature a top priority for the study area. Preserving floodplains and wetlands helps reduce flooding, improve water quality, and protect homes and infrastructure. Recommendations to maintain the quality and function of the existing natural resources in the area include:

- Add larger conservation easements along the streams.
- Cluster development and allow more density in strategic areas so development doesn't sprawl into floodplain.
- Increase buffer requirements with more diversity of vegetation around wetlands and along streams to filter runoff, reduce erosion, and protect habitat. These buffers can also double as greenways or trails.
- Increase storm water management regulations by requiring green infrastructure such as bioswales, rain gardens, permeable pavement, and detention areas.
- Implement sustainable erosion control practices.
- Increase tree protection requirements.



Catalyst Development Framework

The Development strategy for this plan identifies targeted opportunities to guide growth in a way that responds to existing and planned opportunities for the region. It focuses on underutilized sites and key nodes that have the potential to evolve into a more vibrant destination that support community needs. By leveraging these areas for strategic reinvestment, the strategy aims to introduce new activity, support local-serving uses, and begin to establish identifiable centers that strengthen the overall character and function of the corridor. Key components of the plan are illustrated below.



Regional Development Opportunities - Strategy 1

Strategies for regional development build off of the existing and planned nodes in the study area. The area is already a destination and planned regional hub. By targeting locations near highways with minimal site constraints and areas that are aligned with community interest the area can transform into a place that works for all.

1.1 I-285 & I-85 - PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY NODE

This node is highly visible from the highway. Recommendations to build on the DeKalb County Future Land Use (FLU) Plan include adding density, leveraging the success of existing sports and fitness uses to attract active lifestyle businesses, and establishing a strong district identity through highway-scaled gateways and coordinated wayfinding to position the area as a destination.

1.2 SHALLOWFORD ROAD NODE

The Shallowford Road Node can build off the existing momentum around this intersection. There is an opportunity to add needed services to all the residents in the area.

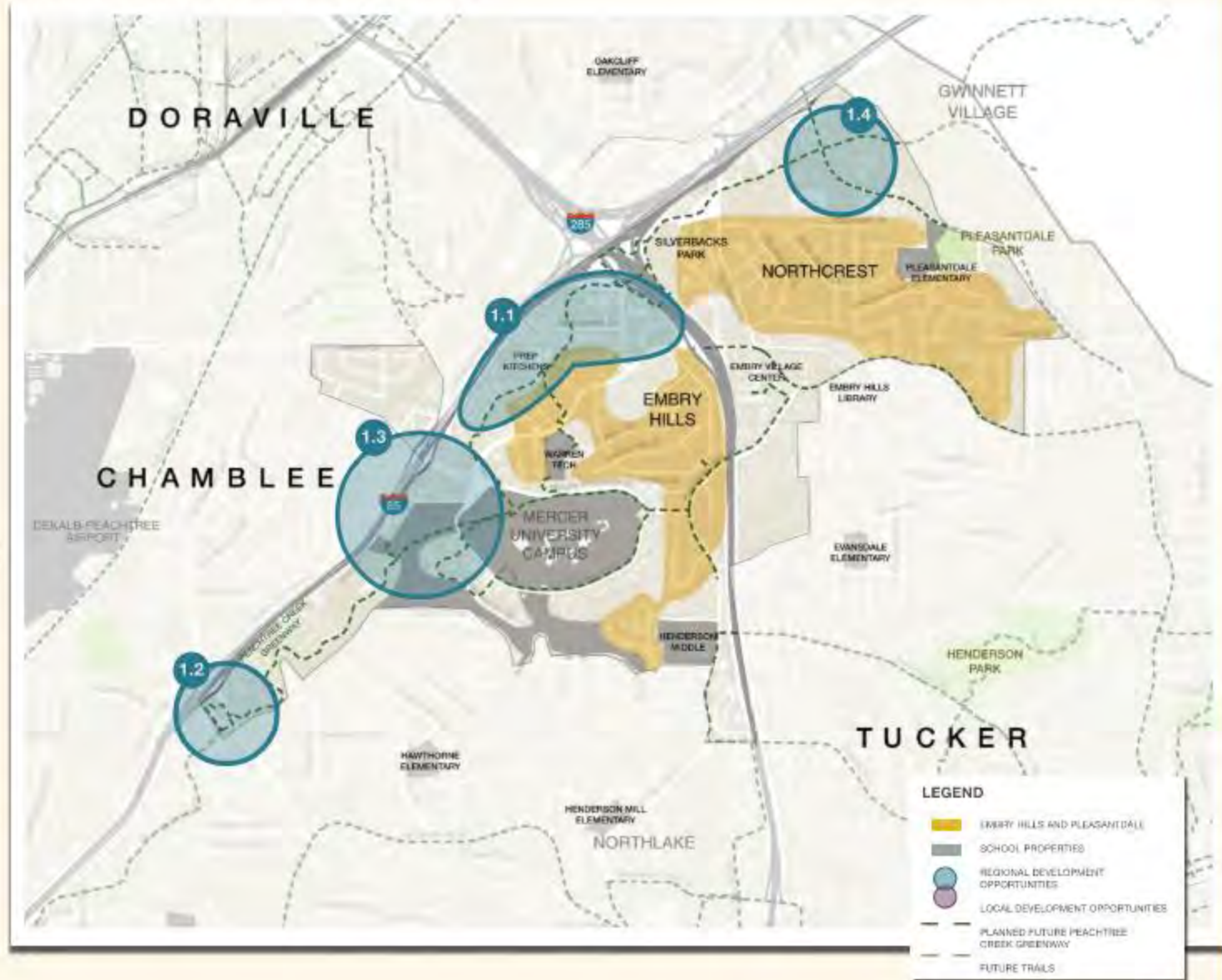
1.3 MERCER ENTRY NODE

The exit off of I-85 acts as a gateway to Mercer University. There are major large parcels covered in surface parking lots along the floodplain that offer infill opportunities for more dense mixed use housing.

1.4 PLEASANTDALE INDUSTRIAL NODE

This is an underutilized light industrial area with large parcels and easy access from major roads. More vacancies are concentrated in this area with limited activity which gives the opportunity

FIGURE 36 - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Art Typology Priority Locations

The study area offers vast opportunities to achieve the broader goals of pedestrian safety, wayfinding, connectivity, and identity through public art. These interventions should be grounded in what each site needs to enhance each of these goals. The plan proposes to review all fences, utility boxes, and intersections as potential art location. Below, the map below highlights specific priority opportunities for intervention throughout the district.



Catalyst Site Public Input

An initial set of eight catalyst sites was identified through a layered analysis focused on areas of highest need, strategic importance, and redevelopment potential. The community then played a key role in shaping priorities by voting on these locations, as shown in the map below. This collaborative process resulted in Embry Village Shopping Center, the Mercer Intersection, and the Presidential PREP Parkway site being ranked as the highest priorities for future investment.

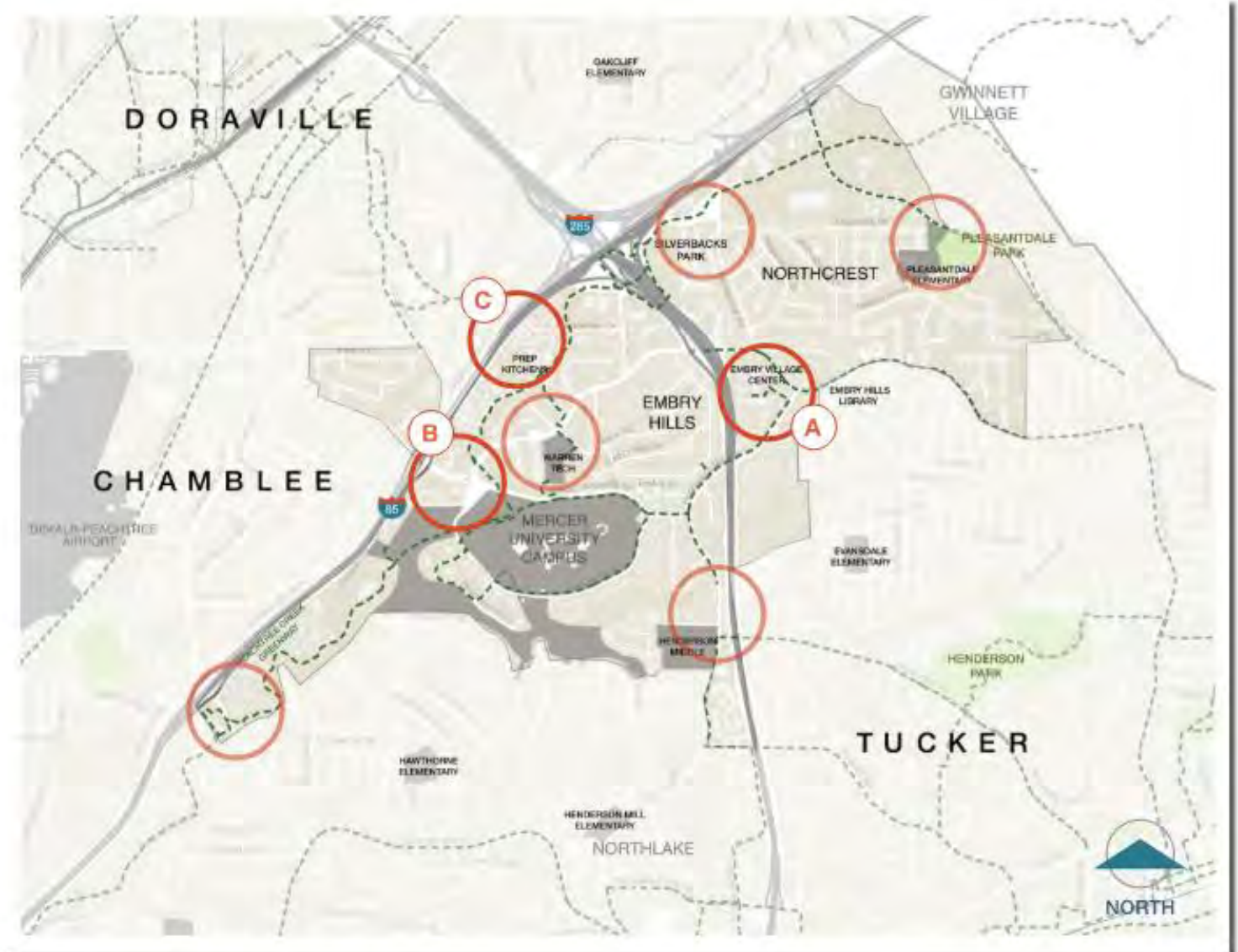
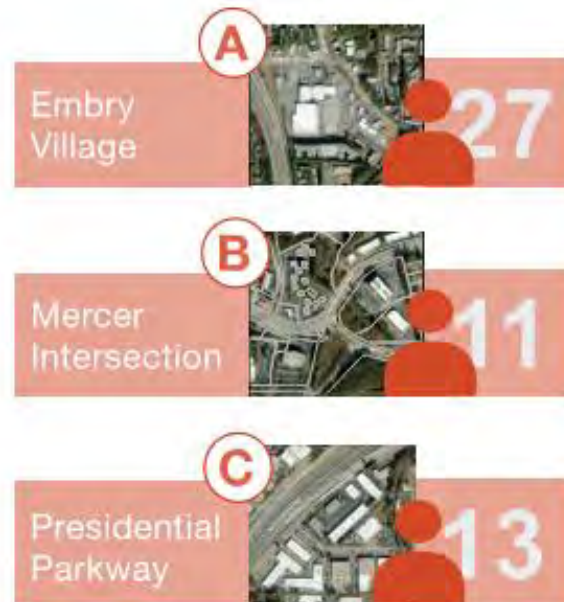
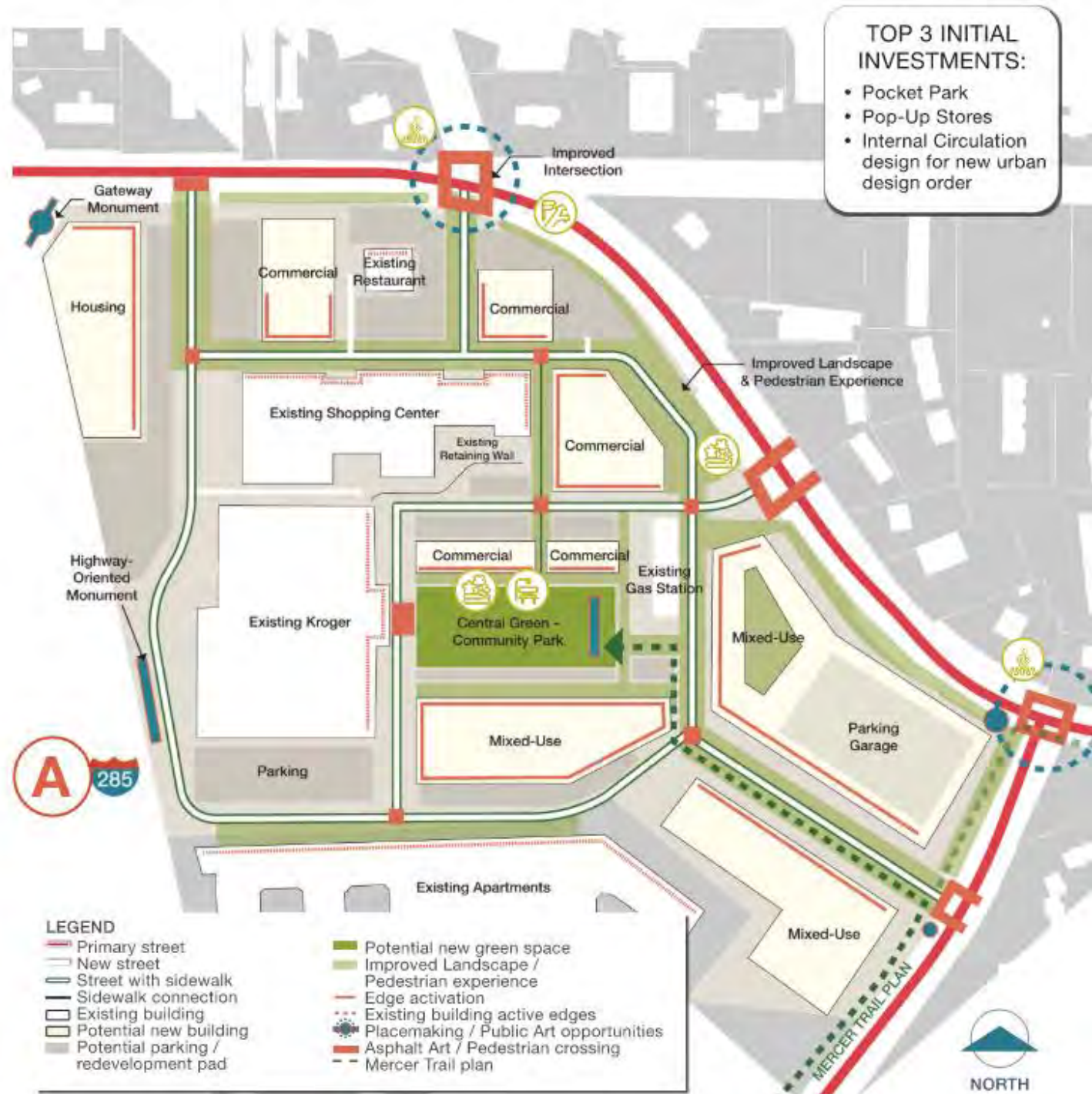


FIGURE 62 • CATALYST SITE VOTING MAP

Catalyst Site A

EMBRY VILLAGE

This catalyst site is located at the location of Embry Village Shopping center, a local hub for commerce at a key intersection of Northcrest and Embry Hills. This area presents a lot of redevelopment potential due to the large percentage of parking lot on the site, minimal grading concerns, highway visibility, major road accessibility, and age of existing structures. The proposed design plan illustrates how future development can be built out with added community amenities, more housing, and neighborhood services.



Catalyst Site B

MERCER INTERSECTION

This catalyst site is at the key intersection of Chamblee-Tucker and Mercer University Drive. This area acts as a gateway into Mercer University and a gateway into the Embury Hills area. Traffic counts show this is one of the busiest intersections in the study area. Traffic movements are both dangerous and confusing to navigate for vehicles and pedestrians. Key recommendations to improve the safety of the area is to remove the slip lane and repurpose it for a public park. Other recommendations include wall murals, intersection design, monuments and gateways to direct everyone where they need to go and create an iconic place. Proposed rezonings to Multi-Family Residential (MR-1) can also promote residential infill and inter-parcel connectivity in this area.



FIGURE 65 • CATALYTIC SITE B • MERCER INTERSECTION

Catalyst Site C

PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY

This catalyst site is located in the area surrounding Presidential Parkway and Presidential Drive. This area contains many amenities, such as ITP Training Academy, a rock climbing gym, an animal shelter, and PREP kitchen. These amenities would benefit from an approachable and inviting area. Catalyst recommendations for this node focus on the accessible greenspace category to jumpstart trail development, screen the highway, preserve the floodplain, and connect people to development.

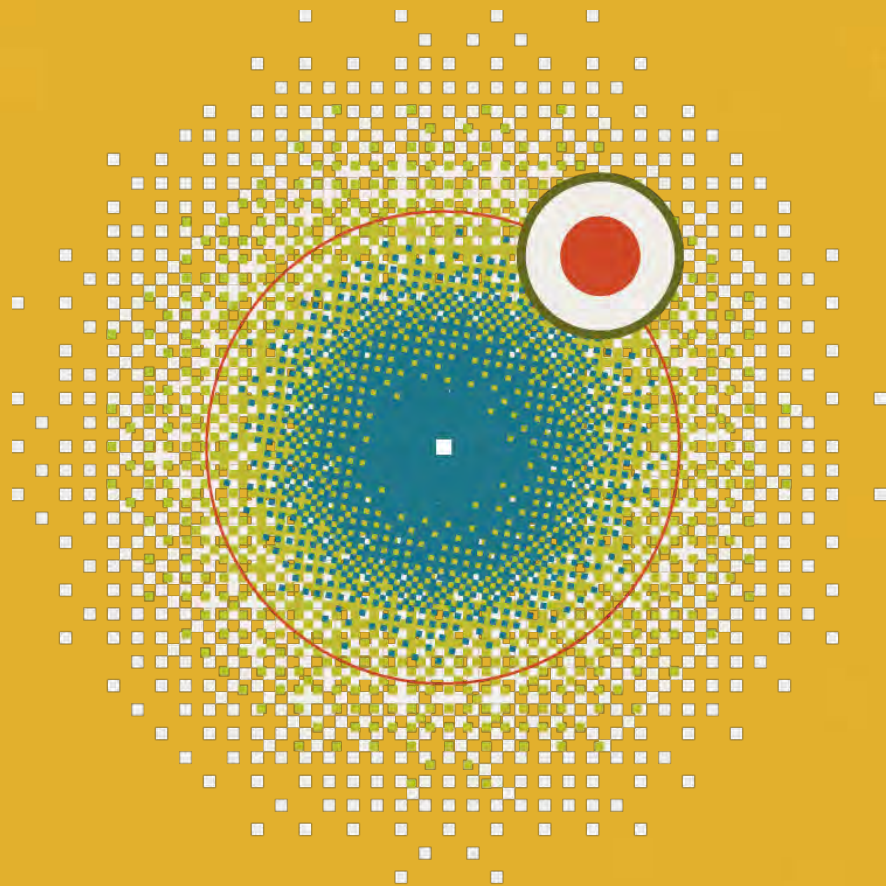
TOP 3 INITIAL INVESTMENTS:

- Gateway signage at key entry points
- Streetscape improvements
- Parklets



FIGURE 58 - CATALYST SITE C - PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY





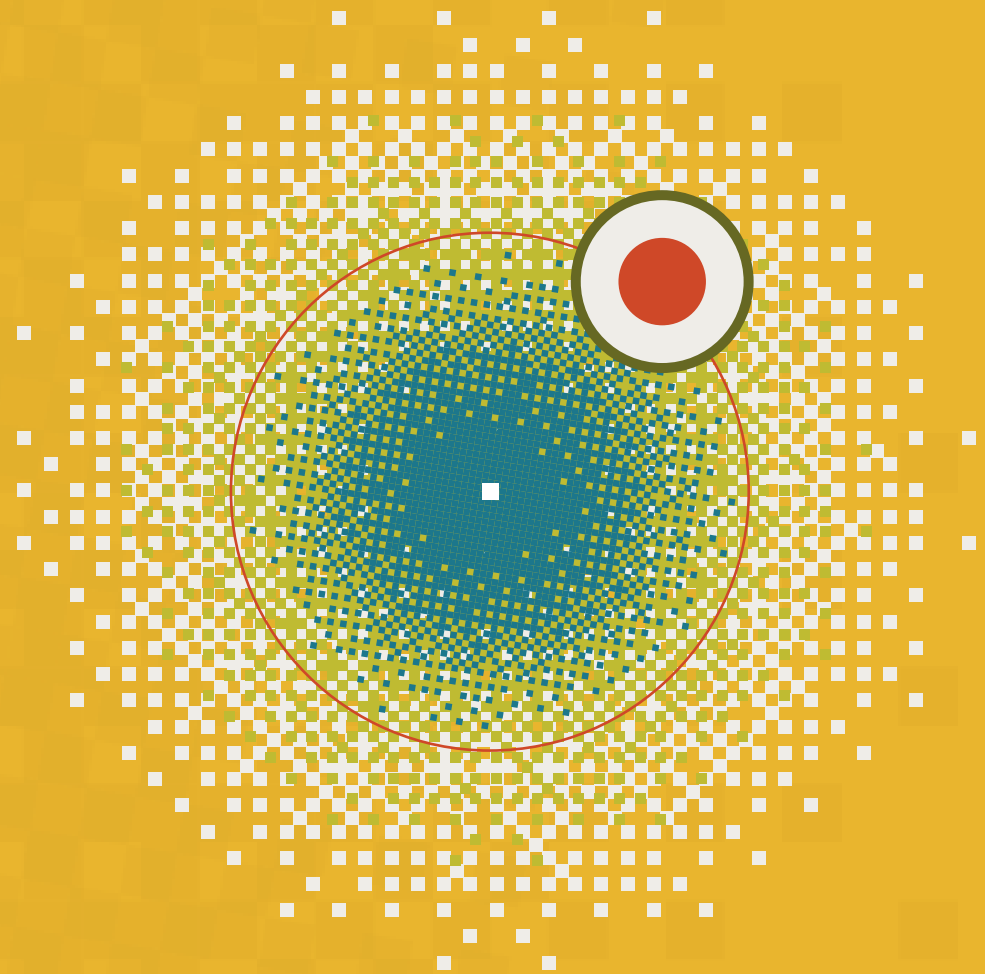
THANK YOU!

Embry Hills- Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities

PLACEMAKING STRATEGY

June 2026

FINAL REPORT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Placemaking Strategy reflects a shared vision shaped through collaboration, dialogue, and community-driven insight across Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway, and surrounding neighborhoods. It represents a collective commitment to creating connected places, enhancing everyday experiences, and strengthening the unique identity of these communities. We would like to especially recognize the leadership of DeKalb County for their guidance, partnership, and continued commitment to advancing community-driven planning efforts.

We are grateful to the time and effort of:

Project Management Team

Aprill King - Senior Planner & Project Manager, DeKalb County Long Range Planning
Larry Washington - Planning Manager, DeKalb County Long Range Planning
Brian Brewer - Planning & Transportation Administrator, DeKalb County Long Range Planning
Eva M. Chauveau - Planner, DeKalb County Long Range Planning
Tricia Prevost - Senior Planner, DeKalb County Long Range Planning
Nicole V. Marchant - Public Outreach Specialist, DeKalb County Long Range Planning

Consultant Team

Lillian Al Haddad - Project Manager, Pond
Lauren Patterson - Planning Lead, Pond
Natalie Bowers - Planner, Pond
Ansley Belton - Community Engagement, Blue Cypress
Amanda Hatton - Community Engagement, Blue Cypress
Jessica Florez - Urban Design and Branding Strategist, JFG Cities
Elizabeth Low - Public Art Engagement, Purpose Possible
Natalia Garzón Martínez - Public Art Engagement, Purpose Possible
Sarah Lawrence - Public Artist

A special thank you goes to:

Commissioner Robert Patrick - DeKalb County District 1
Commissioner LaDena Bolton - DeKalb County Super District 7
Mercer University
Local Business Leaders
The residents and businesses of Presidential Parkway-Embry Hills, and Surrounding Communities, and every partner, local artist, interviewee, and participant whose invaluable input has fueled this transformative vision.

Project Advisory Group

Edgar Tingley - DeKalb Community Council 1
Kelley McManaman - Embry Hills Civic Association
Mari Banks - Embry Hills Civic Association
Beth White Ganga - Tucker Civic Association
Art Hansen - North Briarcliff Civic Association
Chris Woods - GDOT District 7
Victoria Huynh - CPACS
Kellie Apell - Mercer University
Teneisha Jones - City of Chamblee
Mayira Bunting - City of Doraville
Jim Martin - City of Tucker
Aronda Smith - City of Brookhaven
Aye Kotur - Taylor Fine Arts
Jessie O'Neil - ITP Atlanta
Katherine Dirga - MARTA
Mike Vesce - Discover DeKalb
Tiffany Wills - Decide DeKalb
Diana Pitcher-Williams - Decide DeKalb
Cynthia Benefield - DeKalb Parks & Recreation, Cultural Affairs



Time



Energy



Knowledge

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy develops a plan for the district to become a more cohesive, connected, and community enriching center. This area currently boasts a diversity of residents, local businesses, schools, and a university but it lacks connectivity and identity. This plan builds upon the area's strengths while addressing its challenges to create a vibrant district where people can live, work, and gather.

Community engagement drove the plan, with local stakeholders and residents. Key stakeholders, including business owners, local artists, long-time residents, and Mercer University staff brought their expertise and ideas to create an informed plan that supports the many needs of the community. Residents and stakeholders emphasized the need for reducing vehicle and pedestrian conflicts, providing safe and connected sidewalks, and making strategic corridors more comfortable for all modes of transportation. There was also significant support for creating public spaces, establishing places for gathering, and increasing green space access in the area. Through analysis and public input, catalyst sites were identified to implement specific interventions to drive strategic growth. These sites provide opportunities for the future while strategically preserving the character of the existing neighborhoods and housing. The end plan results in a clear, cohesive vision that reflects the identity and pride of the area.

This plan builds on three core pillars: Safe Streets, Accessible Green Space, and Catalytic Development. The plan includes phased implementation, including an immediate tactical urbanism project to establish momentum. With identified funding sources, strategic partnerships, and an action plan for the first 100 days, this placemaking strategy lays an achievable foundation for a vibrant, accessible, and cohesive district.



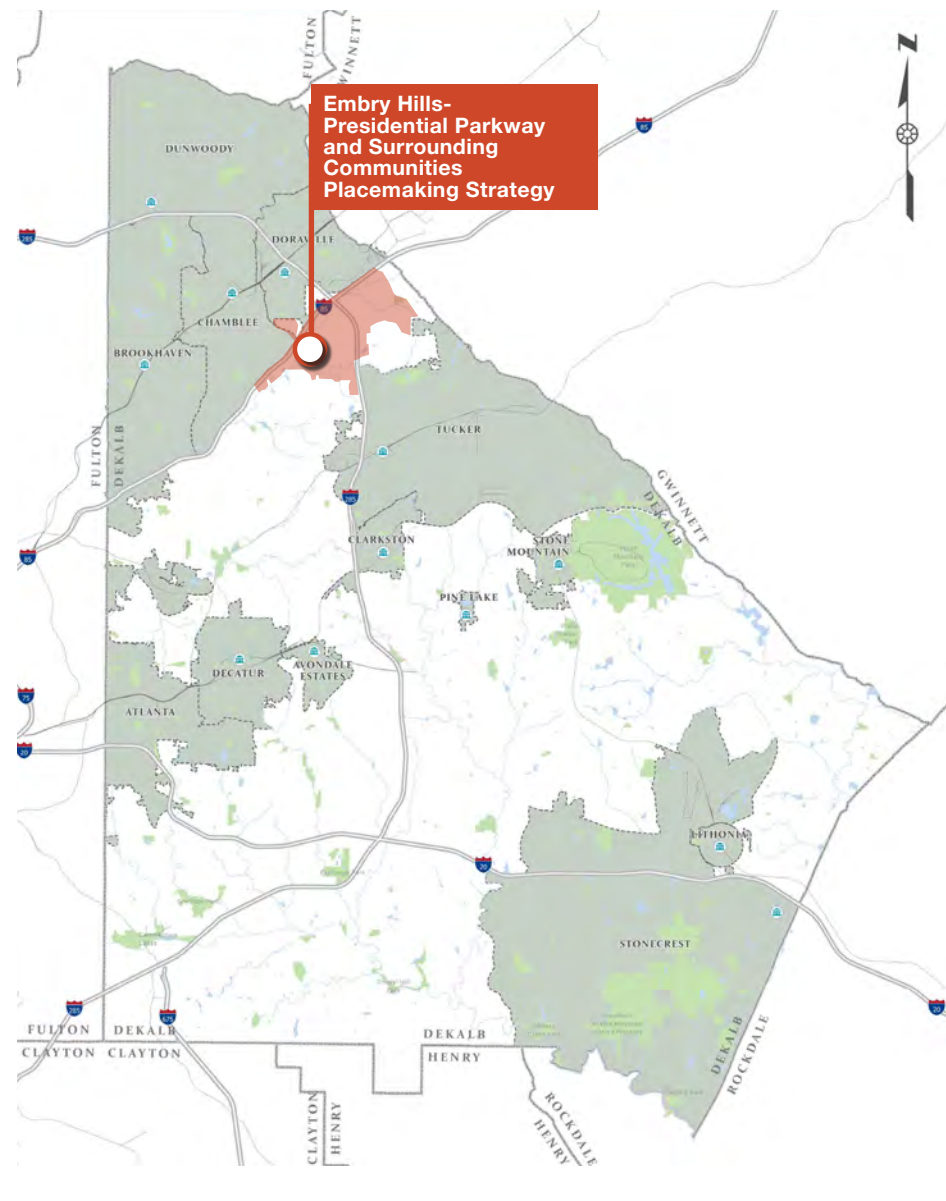
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Project Boundary

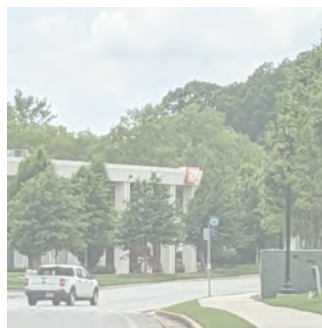
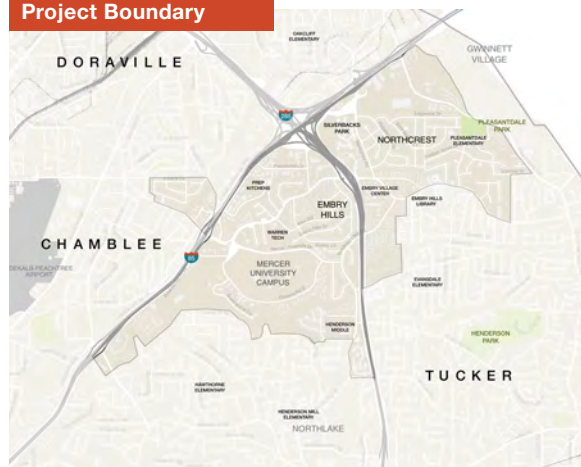


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 The Place, The People, & The Parkway

CHAPTER 1	8
1.1 INTRODUCTION	9
1.2 THE PLANNING CONTEXT	14
1.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS	17

2 Community, Culture, & Creative Voices

CHAPTER 2	29
2.1 ENGAGEMENT GOALS & FRAMEWORK	30
2.2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES SUMMARY	34
2.3 ARTIST & CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT	44
2.4 WHAT WE HEARD: KEY TAKEAWAYS	47

3 Planning & Mobility Framework

CHAPTER 3	50
3.1 VISION & FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW	51
3.2 SAFER STREETS	55
3.3 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE	63
3.4 CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT	68
3.5 LINKING NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGH HOUSING	73

The District Experience Framework

CHAPTER 4	78
4.1 ILLUSTRATING ART, IDENTITY, AND PLACE	79
4.2 PUBLIC ART FRAMEWORK	82
4.3 CATALYST SITES & CONCEPTUAL DESIGN	92

Implementation & Action Plan

CHAPTER 5	106
5.1 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW	107
5.2 PRIORITY PROJECTS & PHASING	111
5.3 FUNDING, PARTNERSHIPS, & DELIVERY	115
5.4 POLICY TOOLS, MONITORING, & NEXT STEPS	118

LIST OF FIGURES

The Place, The People, & The Parkway

FIGURE 1 - UNEMPLOYMENT	19
FIGURE 4 - MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	19
FIGURE 2 - FOREIGN BORN	19
FIGURE 5 - SPANISH-SPEAKING	19
FIGURE 3 - ETHNICITY	19
FIGURE 6 - RACE	19
FIGURE 7 - CURRENT LAND USE	20
FIGURE 8 - FUTURE LAND USE	20
FIGURE 9 - PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH	20
FIGURE 10 - FLOODPLAINS AND WETLANDS	21
FIGURE 11 - EXISTING TRAIL PLANS, STREAMS AND CREEKS	21
FIGURE 12 - SCHOOL PARCELS	22
FIGURE 13 - FREIGHT	23
FIGURE 14 - CRASH DENSITY	23
FIGURE 15 - PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST INVOLVED CRASHES	23
FIGURE 17 - NEXT GEN TRANSIT ROUTES	24
FIGURE 18 - CURRENT TRANSIT ROUTES AND STOPS	24
FIGURE 16 - BIKE TRIPS	24
FIGURE 19 - UNDEVELOPED AND UNBUILDABLE	25
FIGURE 20 - VACANT AND PUBLIC LAND	25
FIGURE 21 - BUILDING AGE	25

Community, Culture, & Creative Voices

FIGURE 22 - MAJOR ENGAGEMENT MILESTONES	35
FIGURE 23 - MULTIPLE CYCLISTS CROSSING THE I-285 OVERPASS	36

FIGURE 24 - COWPATH AT CHAMBLEE-TUCKER ROAD	36
FIGURE 25 - HIGH TRAFFIC AND HIGH PEDESTRIAN USE AREAS	36
FIGURE 26 - BROKEN LIGHTED CROSSING INFRASTRUCTURE ..	36
FIGURE 27 - PROMOTIONAL FLYER	38

Planning & Mobility Framework

FIGURE 28 - CHAMBLEE-TUCKER ROADWAY ANALYSIS	57
FIGURE 29 - SAFER STREETS STRATEGIES SCORING MATRIX ..	59
FIGURE 30 - MAIN STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY ..	60
FIGURE 31 - SECONDARY STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY	61
FIGURE 32 - INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY	62
FIGURE 33 - PRESERVATION STRATEGY	65
FIGURE 35 - NEW PARK STRATEGY	66
FIGURE 36 - TRAILHEAD GATEWAY STRATEGY	67
FIGURE 37 - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	70
FIGURE 38 - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	71
FIGURE 43 - NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITY STRATEGY	72
FIGURE 44 - HOUSING STRATEGY	75
FIGURE 45 - PRECEDENT CONNECTION AND IDENTITY IMAGERY	77

The District Experience Framework

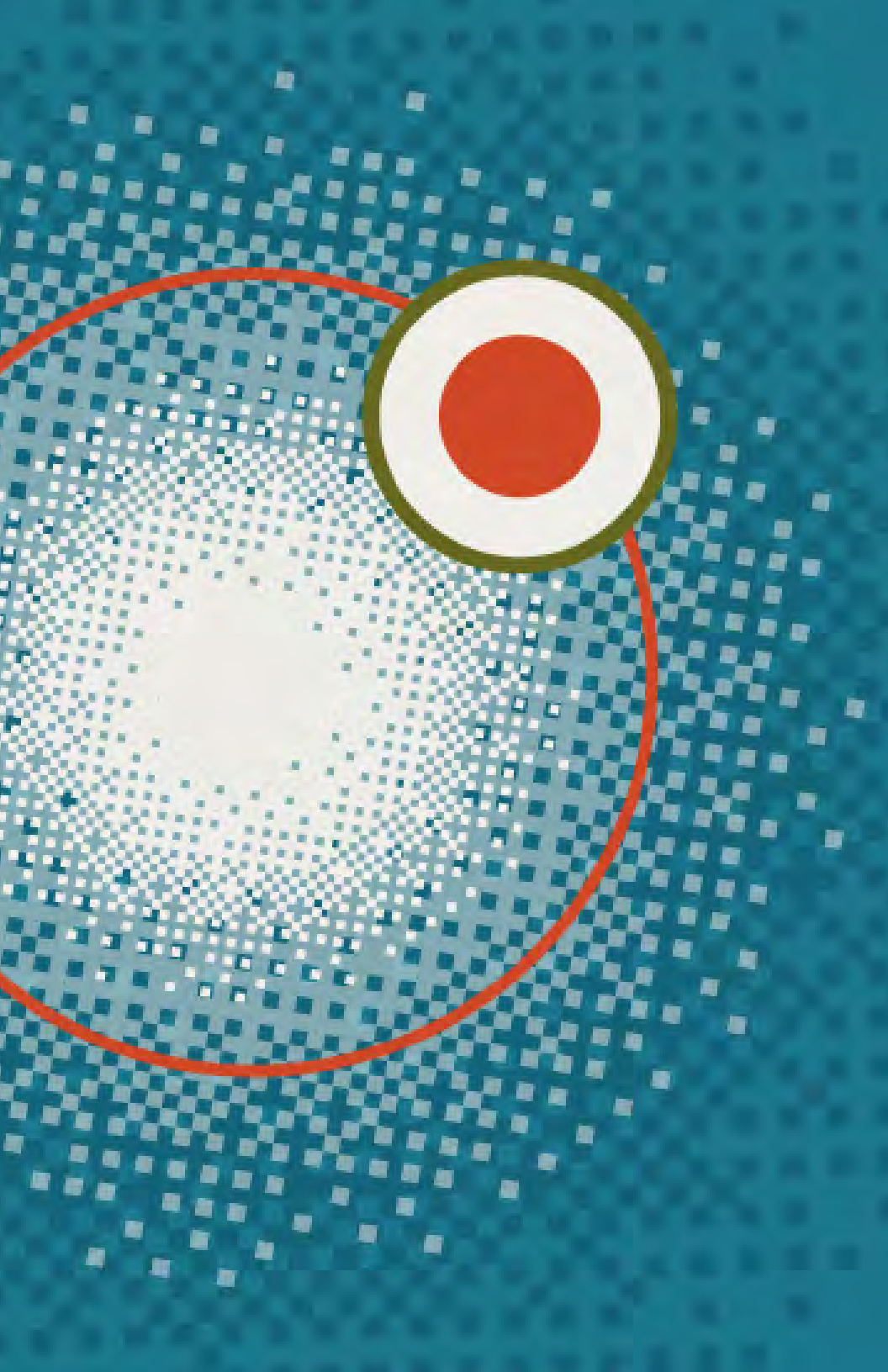
FIGURE 46 - BRANDING CONCEPTS. DESIGNS ARE CONCEPTUAL AND FOR RENDERING PURPOSES ONLY - DIAGRAMS DO NOT SHOW A FINAL DESIGN SIGNAGE PLAN	81
FIGURE 47 - THIS BUSINESS OWNER AT THE PREP SITE	

WITHIN THE STUDY AREA IS ALREADY DEPLOYING SIMPLE VIBRANCY ENHANCEMENTS TO ENHANCE THEIR CORNER OF THE BUILDING. PHOTO 2026, COURTESY OF JESSICA FLÓREZ.	85
FIGURE 48 - PART OF A LARGER PROJECT TO INVITE THE COMMUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH A SPACE NEAR A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, THIS INSTALLATION SHOWS HOW SIMPLE USE OF COLOR CAN MAKE A POWERFUL CHANGE. "BRIGHT STRIPES INSTALLATION / TALLER KEN + ALLOY DESIGN" 21 SEP 2021. ARCHDAILY.	85
FIGURE 49 - "HERE WE GO" BY TERESA AFTERNOON, 2024, LAWRENCEVILLE, GA. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.	86
FIGURE 50 - "A FLEETING MOMENT" BY TRUDY TRAN, 2023, ATLANTA, GA.	86
FIGURE 51 - "WALK" BY LOPE MAX DIAZ, 2016, CHAPEL HILL, NC. COURTESY OF TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL COMMUNITY ARTS & CULTURE	87
FIGURE 52 - PAINTING OF THE BIDDLE STREET AND VALLEY STREET INTERSECTION IN BALTIMORE, MD, 2022, AS PART OF THE JOHNSTON SQUARE "BEE SAFE" ART CROSSWALK PROGRAM. IMAGE COURTESY OF MADE YOU LOOK BALTIMORE.	87
FIGURE 53 - CASTLEBERRY HILL WELCOME SIGN, ATLANTA, GA. PHOTO POSTED BY BURNAWAY, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS	88
FIGURE 54 - LINCOLN SQUARE GATEWAY, CHICAGO, IL. PHOTO 2024 BY CHRISTINE ZWOLINSKI/ THECHICAGOGOODLIFE.COM.	88
FIGURE 55 - THIS BUS SHELTER INCORPORATES THE HISTORY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN WHICH IT RESIDES. A TAPESTRY OF ROGERS ROAD BY KIARA CHATTERJEE, 2021, CHAPEL HILL, NC. PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL COMMUNITY ARTS & CULTURE.	89
FIGURE 56 - BRIDGE OF HOPE, 2020, MARIETTA, GA. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIETTA ARTS COUNCIL.	89
FIGURE 57 - MUTUALITIES; LIVES INTERWOVEN, BY FORLANO DESIGN, 2019, SHENTON PARK, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.	90
FIGURE 58 - ARLINGTON, VA. "LUMINOUS BODIES" BY CLIFF GARTEN. INSTALLED 2020. PHOTO BY JEREMY GREEN.	90
FIGURE 59 - CHOSEWOOD PARK, ATLANTA. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA TACTICAL URBANISM GUIDE.	91
FIGURE 60 - BOULEVARD GRANADA TACTICAL WALK LANE IN ATLANTA GEORGIA. IMAGE COURTESY OF ATLANTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	91
FIGURE 61 - CATALYST SITE PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA	93
FIGURE 62 - CATALYST SITE VOTING MAP	94
FIGURE 63 - EMBRY VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER CATALYST SITE RENDERING	96
FIGURE 65 - CATALYTIC SITE B - MERCER INTERSECTION	99
FIGURE 66 - MERCER AND CHAMBLEE-TUCKER INTERSECTION CATALYST SITE	100
FIGURE 67 - ARTIST MURAL INITIAL DESIGNS	102
FIGURE 68 - CATALYST SITE C - PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY	103
FIGURE 69 - PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY CATALYST SITE RENDERING	104

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CHAPTER 1

The Place, The People, & The Parkway



1.1

INTRODUCTION

Project Overview

Project Purpose

This study establishes a clear, implementable vision for a more connected, livable, and developable corridor in DeKalb County. Anchored by key destinations such as Mercer University, ITA Atlanta, and surrounding neighborhoods, the corridor serves a diverse and established community but remains fragmented and auto-oriented. This plan aligns land use, mobility, housing, and open space to strengthen connectivity, improve quality of life, and unlock targeted reinvestment opportunities.

The result is a corridor-wide framework that prioritizes safe and accessible streets, connected public spaces, and strategic redevelopment, positioning the entire study area for long-term resilience and growth.



The Process

This study did not follow a traditional linear planning process. It evolved through a series of iterative steps, grounded in community voices and expanded in scope as deeper needs emerged. What began as a public art strategy quickly transformed into a comprehensive corridor vision addressing safety, housing, open space, and catalytic redevelopment.

LISTENING & DISCOVERY

The process began with deep community listening and on the ground observation. Through pop-ups, stakeholder interviews, and corridor walks, residents and stakeholders shared a consistent message: before placemaking, there is a need for safer streets, accessible open spaces, and stronger connections across neighborhoods. This phase grounded the project in lived experience rather than assumptions.

REDEFINING THE APPROACH

As community priorities became clear, the project team worked with DeKalb County to expand the scope beyond public art into a broader, LCI-level framework. This pivot ensured the plan could respond to real challenges of mobility gaps, housing pressures, underutilized sites, and fragmented public spaces, while still embedding identity and placemaking throughout.

INTEGRATED ANALYSIS & VISIONING

Building on this expanded scope, the team layered technical analysis with community input to understand how the corridor functions today and where opportunities exist. This included mobility and safety analysis, housing conditions, open space access, and identification of catalytic sites. The result was a unified vision that connects neighborhoods, strengthens identity, and positions the corridor for long-term reinvestment.

IMPLEMENTATION & ACTION

The final phase focused on moving from vision to action. The plan outlines clear, phased strategies tied to real opportunities, prioritized projects, partnerships, and next steps that can be advanced by the County and its partners. This ensures the work is not just visionary and aspirational, but also actionable and grounded in what can realistically be delivered.



Regional History

The study area has been shaped by infrastructure and institutional growth, not by a unified vision. The construction of I-85, the Presidential Parkway corridor, and major campuses like Veterans Affairs established the area as a strategic location, but also introduced lasting divisions. Surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas developed independently, creating a corridor of strong assets that were never designed to connect.

The Regional legacy is still visible today:

1. Infrastructure fragments the corridor: highways and arterials prioritize movement over connection
2. Institutions anchor yet isolate: campuses limit integration with surrounding areas
3. Growth happened in silos: neighborhoods, retail, and jobs evolved separately
4. Connections are missing: gaps in walkability, access, and identity persist

Today, the opportunity is to stitch these pieces together, transforming a corridor of parts into a connected, livable place.



1950

Wetlands, Farms & Dairy

- Lawson General Hospital, which generally served amputees
- Gordon Airport, and Post-World War II development
- Leading producer of dairy in the Southeast
- Area featured ranch homes and churches
- Wetlands and farmland
- **Sparsely populated**

1960

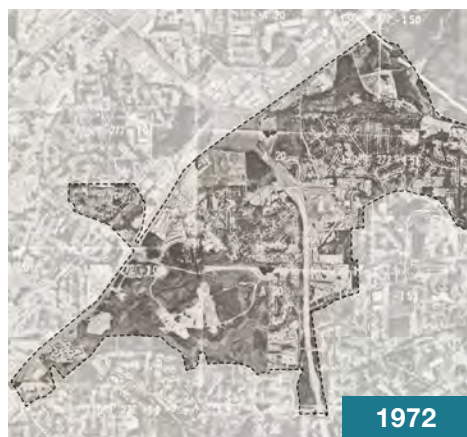
Highway Construction & The Embry Family

- **1955 Embry family bought 600 acres of land and founded the Embry neighborhood**
- **Construction of the highway system**
- Development occurs along with the highway,
- Transitioning farmland to subdivision
- 1963 Embry Hills shopping center opens

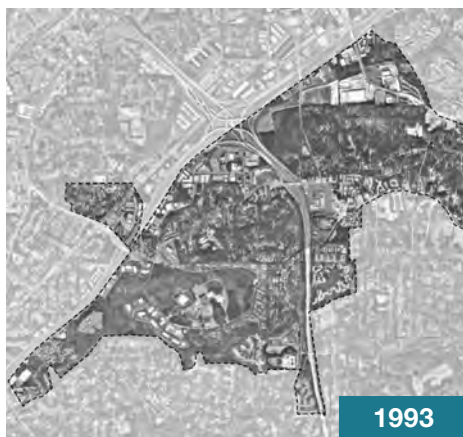
1970

Institutions Rise, Neighborhoods Expand

- 1971 Northlake Mall opens
- 1972 opening of Warren Technical School
- **1972 Mercer University Campus opens**
- Expanded commercial businesses along the highway



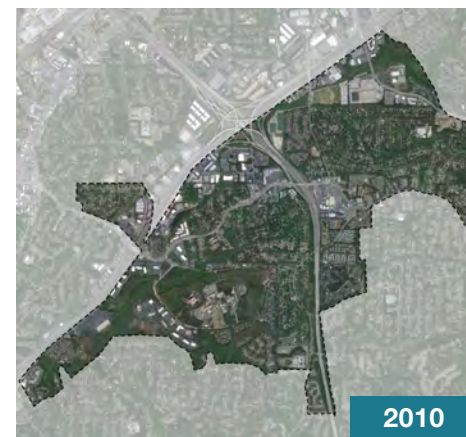
1972



1993



2000



2010

1980

A Community on the Move

- Industrial growth continues to pull new workers into the area
- Neighborhoods around Henderson Mill, Pleasantdale, Northcrest, and Flowers Road become fully developed
- The area becomes one of the most culturally diverse populations in the state
- I-285 expanded to 8 lanes
- 1987 Interstate bridges under construction

1990

Population Boom

- 40% population growth
- The concept of an “international village” in Chamblee was formed
- 1996 north area of I-285 expands to 10 lanes
- 1996 Henderson Middle School opened representing 30+ countries and at least 50 languages

2000

Atlanta Silverbacks

- 2004 Atlanta Silverbacks development begins
- Commercial areas begin to age and lose cohesion
- Residents continue to express strong attachment to Embry Hills as a stable, family-oriented neighborhood
- Population growth slows
- Community gathering spaces continue to be limited despite rising demand

2010

Stability, Diversity, & Slow Transformation

- The area is fully built out
- Retail and commercial districts age noticeably
- Despite aging infrastructure, the community remains highly desirable for families seeking stability, schools, and affordability.
- Regional plans begin to introduce future-oriented ideas, including: The concept of I-285 BRT, Early trail planning linking Mercer University, neighborhoods, and parks
- Long-term visions for a more connected regional center

Today

Reconnecting, Re-imagining, & Redefining Identity

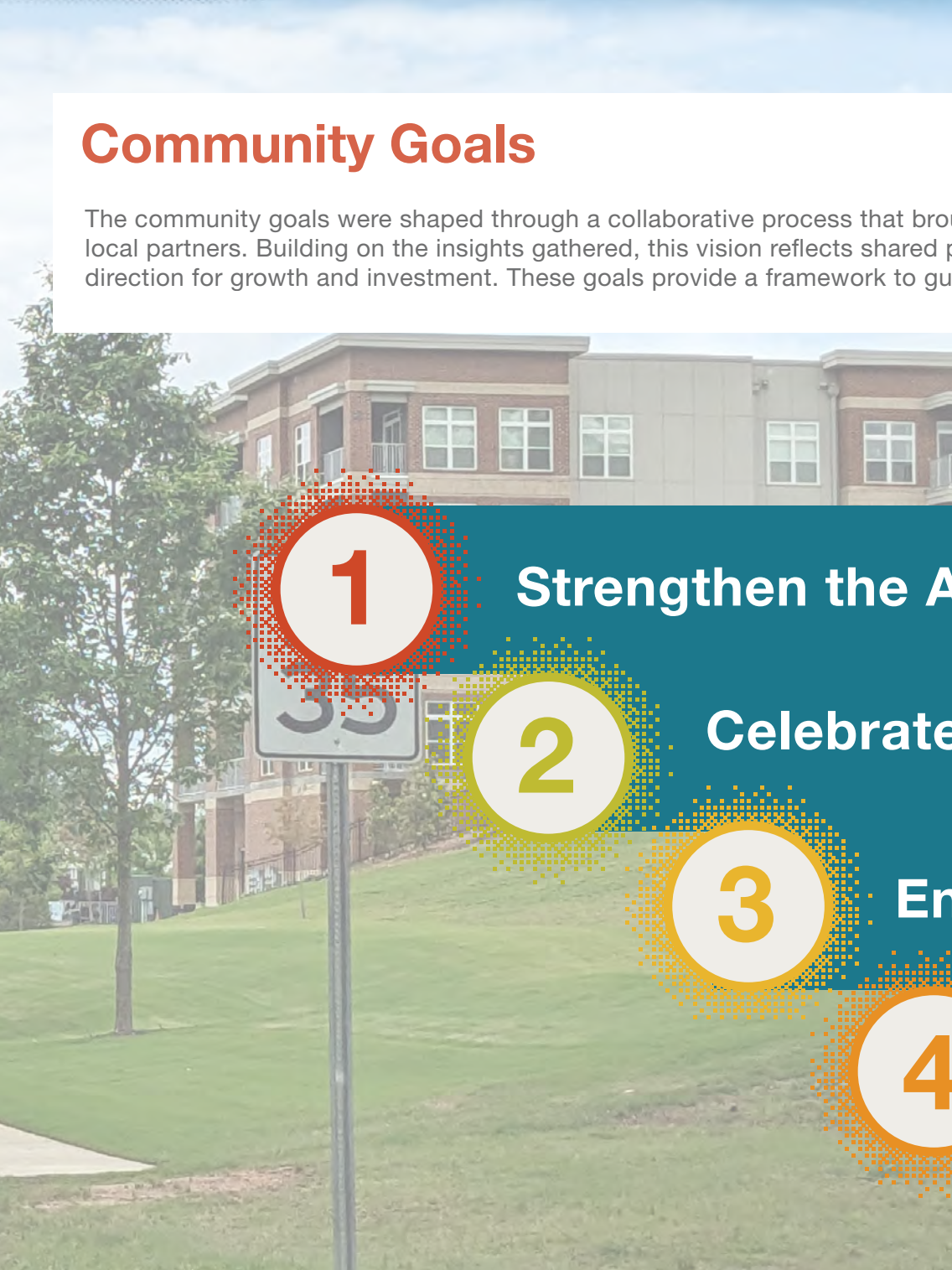
- The area enters the 2020s as a mature, fully built-out suburb
- Community and County discussions shift strongly toward redevelopment, especially at Presidential Parkway, identified as the most significant catalyst site, with aging office parks and underutilized parking lots offering opportunity
- The decade focuses on re-imagining public spaces, cultural identity, and community gathering, responding to long-standing gaps in the area (noted by both residents and stakeholders)

THE FUTURE

Community Goals

The community goals were shaped through a collaborative process that brought together input from residents, stakeholders, and local partners. Building on the insights gathered, this vision reflects shared priorities for the future of the area and establishes a clear direction for growth and investment. These goals provide a framework to guide decision-making and organize recommendations.

Project Goals



1

Strengthen the Area's Unique Identity

2

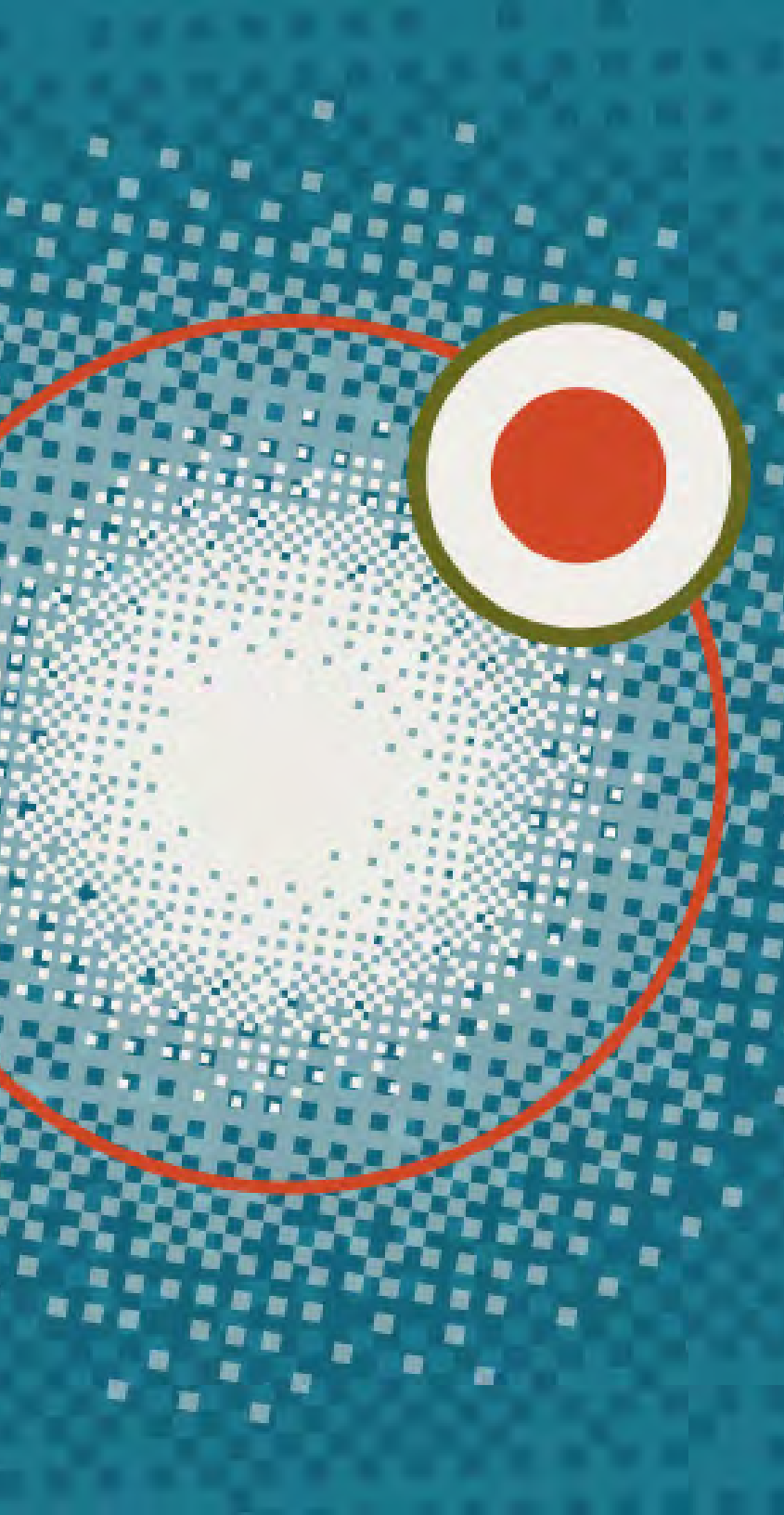
Celebrate Arts and Culture

3

Enhance Placemaking

4

Improve Connectivity and Mobility



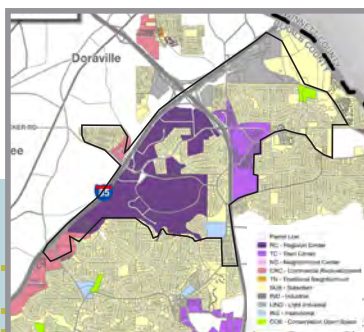
1.2

The Planning Context

PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

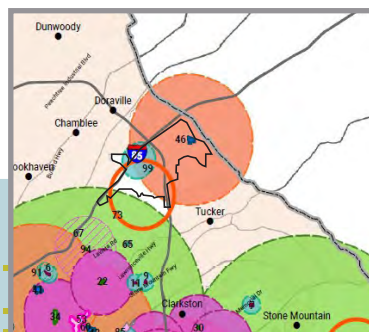
Ongoing Planning Efforts: Building On Momentum

To understand the planning context, existing plans, and ongoing efforts across DeKalb County were reviewed. While many of these plans shape the broader region, there has been limited focused study on this specific area, with much of the previous work centered on trail opportunities and connections. Key documents (including the DeKalb 2050 Unified Plan, DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Plan, Peachtree Creek Greenway Master Plan, and Mercer University Trails Master Plan) helped inform this study, along with plans from the nearby communities of Doraville, Tucker, and Chamblee. Full summaries of each plan with key take aways are in appendix B.



DeKalb County 2050 Unified Plan

Regional Centers and Town Centers proposed around neighborhoods



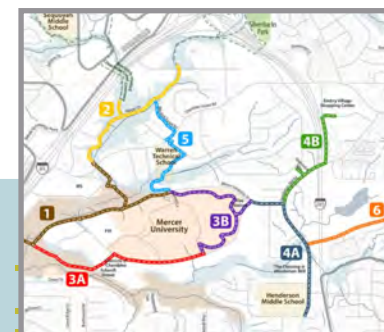
DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Plan

Neighborhood park gap identified in this area



Peachtree Creek Greenway Master Plan

Proposed North Fork Greenway section



Mercer Trail Master Plan

Fully connected trail system proposed around university

FOUNDATIONAL

TANGENTIAL

Doraville Comprehensive Plan

Identifies Chamblee-Tucker as a priority investment area. Proposes business or light industrial adjacent our study area.

Doraville Peachtree Creek Greenway Plan

Plans a connection over I-85 to the proposed Peachtree Creek Greenway through our study area.

Tucker Comprehensive Plan

A ten-year roadmap for the City of Tucker, guiding future land development and public investment.

Tucker Trail Plan

Plans trail connectivity throughout Tucker and to the region.

Chamblee Public Arts Plan

Guides future investment in the arts and strategies to promote cultural identity.

Mercer University Strategic Plan

Outlines a vision for compelling programs and prepared students for futures in a global community.

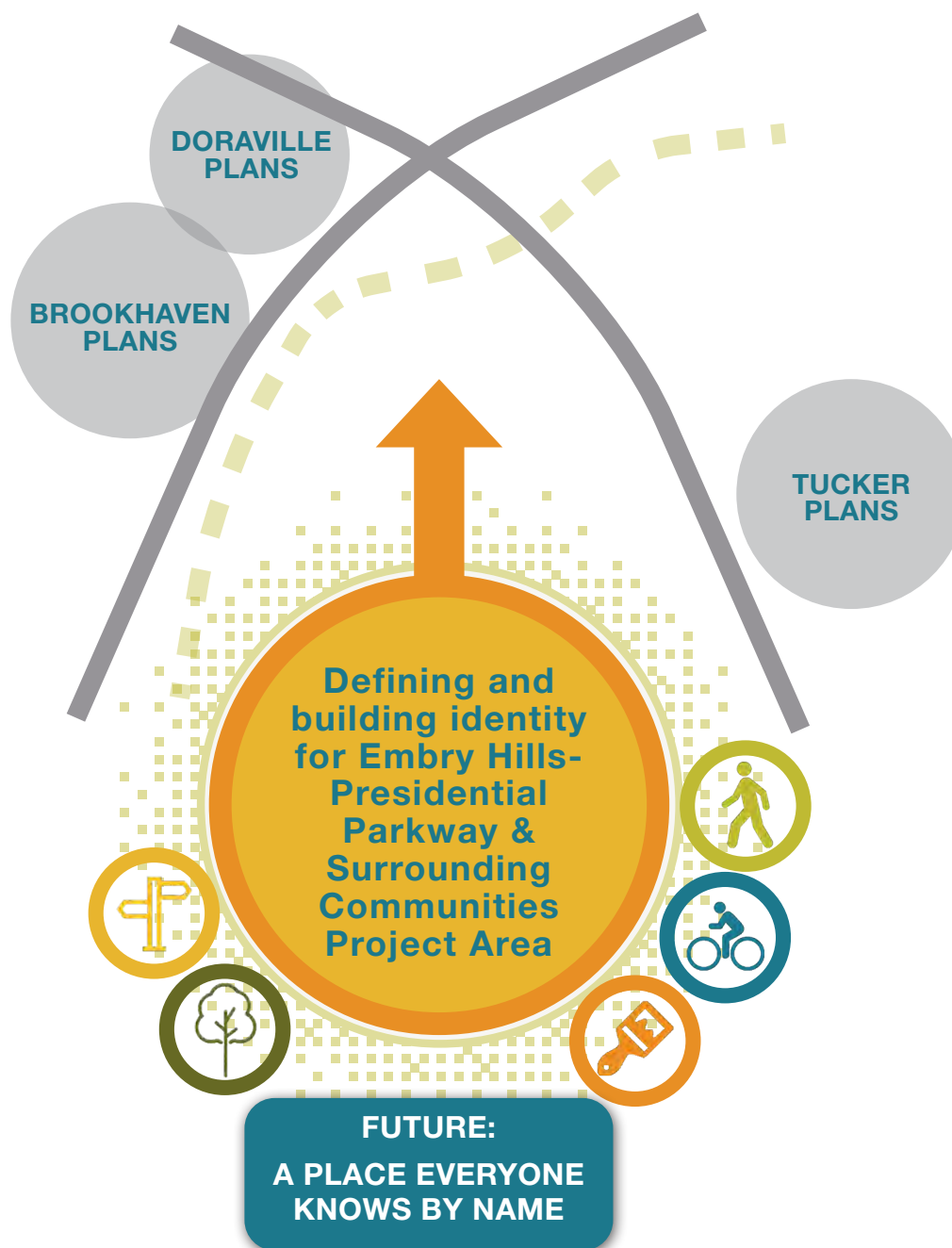
Key Takeaways

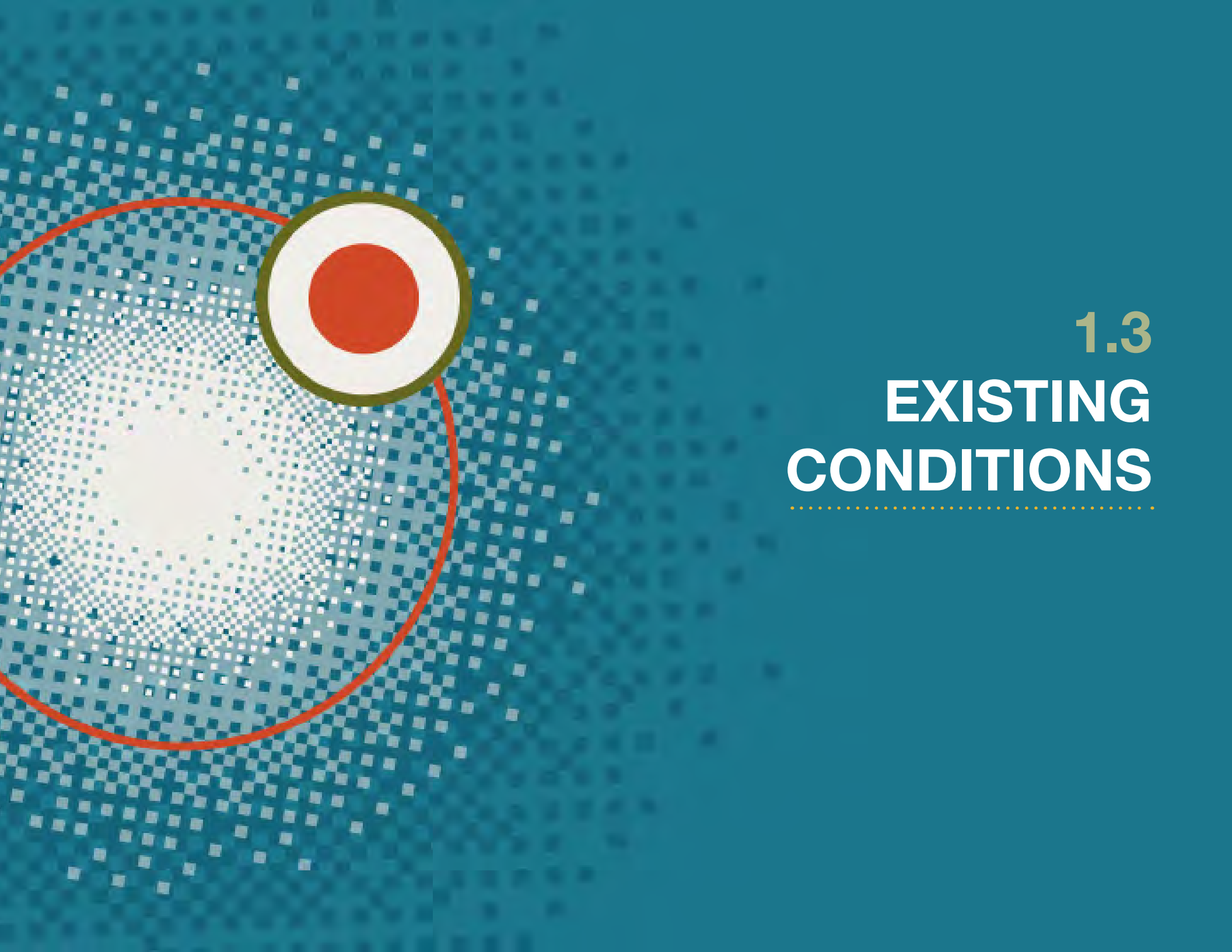
Each of these plans establish important connections, development, and growth areas adjacent to our study area.

This area has been defined by I-285 and I-85, the neighboring cities and towns, and environmental systems, that act as a natural barrier. Existing plans illustrate ideas for providing connections to the area, but have yet to be implemented.

The existing planning context lacks a comprehensive, area-specific vision. While previous trail-focused plans have contributed to shaping part of the area's future, they address only one aspect of its overall development. These efforts highlight the need to better understand how future growth, particularly within the regional and town centers, will take shape and how different planning initiatives can be coordinated. They also underscore the importance of aligning with the DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Plan to identify opportunities for neighborhood parks, as well as advancing strategies that strengthen identity through wayfinding and public art.

This study responds to each of these previous studies by providing clear steps to help define and build a cohesive identity for Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway, and surrounding communities.





1.3

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Understanding the Project Area

The next pages are an inventory
of data on the community and the
built environment of the Embry Hills-
Presidential Parkway & Surrounding
Communities.



Demographic Snapshot



Land Use and Zoning



Environmental Conditions



Cultural and Institutional Assets



Transportation



Mobility



Development



Demographic and Socio-Economic Snapshot

The study area is home to a diverse and well-integrated population, with distinct demographic patterns across different neighborhoods. The northeastern portion of the study area, near Gwinnett Village, includes a higher concentration of Black residents, while nearby Tucker has a more predominantly white population. This northeastern area also experiences higher rates of unemployment and includes a greater share of foreign-born and Spanish-speaking residents. Overall, the study area has a significant Hispanic population and reflects a mix of Hispanic and non-Hispanic communities. Hispanic residents are particularly concentrated in areas north of Mercer University, contributing to the cultural diversity and character of the corridor.

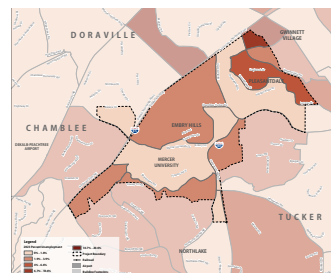


FIGURE 1 - UNEMPLOYMENT

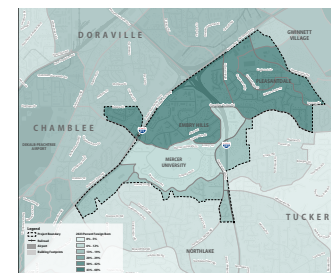


FIGURE 2 - FOREIGN BORN

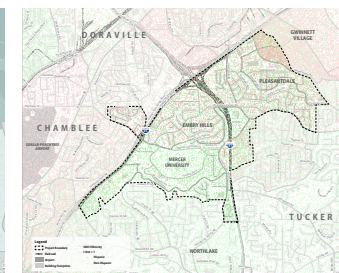


FIGURE 3 - ETHNICITY

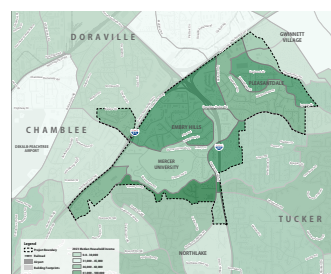
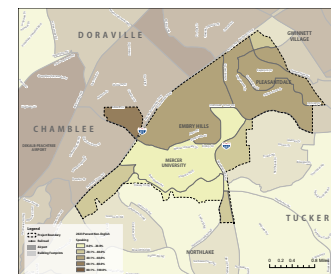
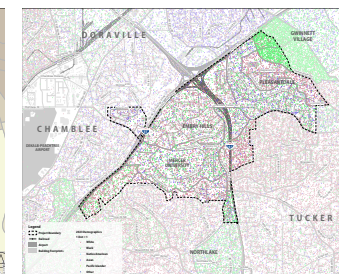
FIGURE 4 - MEDIAN
HOUSEHOLD INCOME
Maps not to scaleFIGURE 5 - SPANISH-
SPEAKING

FIGURE 6 - RACE



47.4%
Bachelor's
Degree Or Higher
(DeKalb County)

See Appendix A for additional
existing conditions mapping and
analysis

**Diverse
Community**



20%
Projected
Increase In
Population Over
5 Years



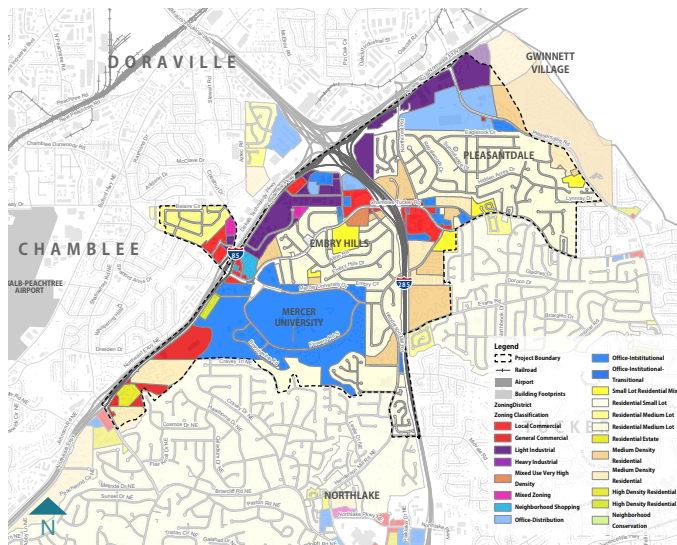
Land Use and Zoning

The study area includes a diverse mix of land uses that reflect its role as both a residential community and a regional corridor. The Future Land Use plan focuses on creating hubs around existing neighborhoods. The combination of existing uses and current investment creates both opportunities and challenges, influencing how the area can grow, connect, and evolve over time.



Growing Area

FIGURE 7 - CURRENT LAND USE

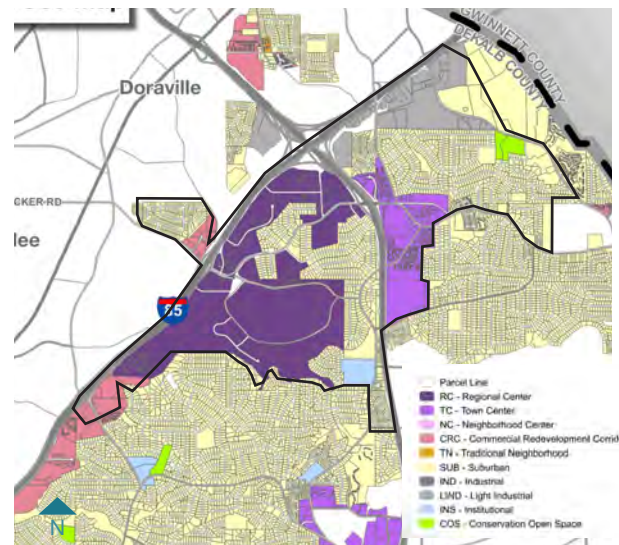


There is a mixture of uses in the area, ranging from single family housing to multi-family apartments, to commercial, institutional, and industrial. Industrial and commercial areas are concentrated at the western edge of the district, bordering I-85. Higher density housing is concentrated to the east of I-285.

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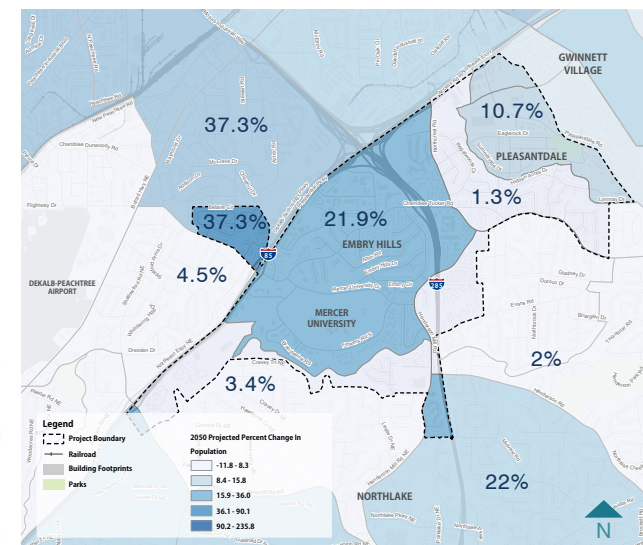
SCALE: 1"=1000'

FIGURE 8 - FUTURE LAND USE



The Future Land Use plan identifies major changes in our study area. The Regional Center and Town Center designation illustrates future investment and a cohesive strategy for development in this region. Both are focused near the highway corridors where older infrastructure is aging out.

FIGURE 9 - PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH



Projected population growth in this area is not expected to occur at the same rate in the same regions. Notably, the center of the study area and to the west of I-85 is expected to have the greatest population growth by 2050. The Northlake area to the south is expected to have a 22% increase in population.

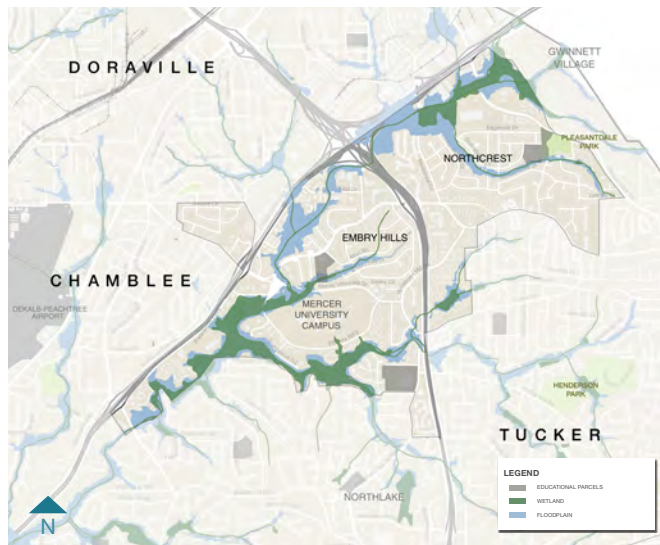


Environmental Conditions

TRAILS, GREENWAYS, AND WETLANDS

Environmental buffers and topography influence the access and experience of the study area. Streams, wooded areas, and floodplains create natural barriers that reinforce the separation between residential pockets and commercial arterials.

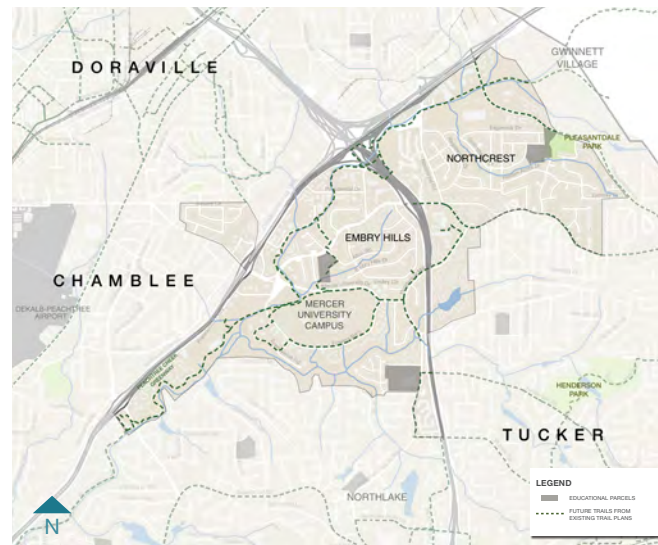
FIGURE 10 - FLOODPLAINS AND WETLANDS



Wetlands and floodplain are a large feature in the district, influencing development opportunities and patterns. Wetlands are located surrounding the Mercer University area, and are also in the northeast portion of the study area. The wetland and floodplain areas separate parcels along the highway and residential areas, creating a natural buffer for differing communities.

0 500 1000
SCALE: 1"=1000'

FIGURE 11 - EXISTING TRAIL PLANS, STREAMS AND CREEKS



These are trails that have been established by other plans and ongoing planning efforts in DeKalb County. One major plan is the Peachtree Creek Greenway Plan, proposed on the east side of the study area, which would connect all the way south to Atlanta. The Mercer Trail Master Plan is a trail network plan that would establish a large increase in trail and greenway access in the study area. These trails would connect multiple key locations in the area, from the Mercer University Campus to shopping centers in the area.

Key Planned Trails
+
Multiple Creeks
+
Large Wetland Presence

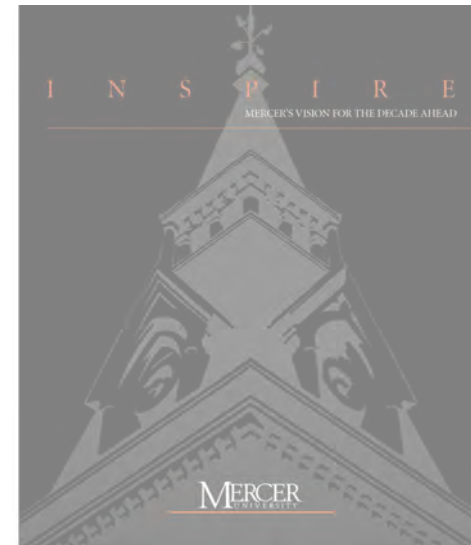
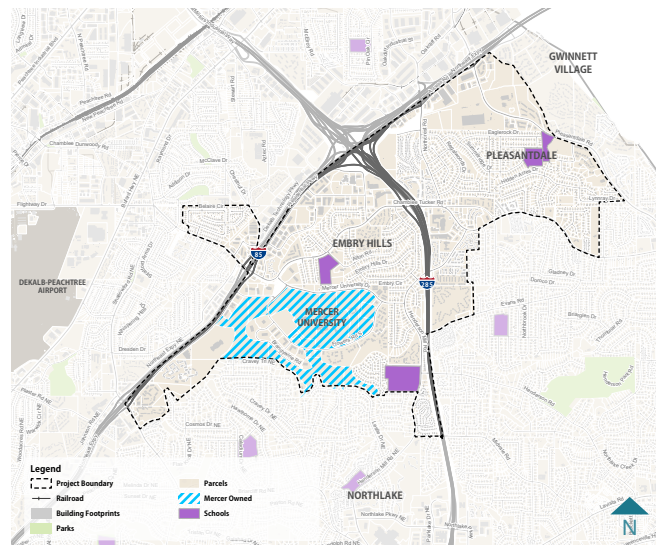


Cultural and Institutional Assets

The study area functions as an important educational hub. There is a concentration of institutional and cultural assets that anchor the district and support daily community life. Educational institutions are the most prominent assets, with Mercer University serving as a major anchor in the center, complemented by several nearby schools and a technical college. These institutions not only provide access to education but also generate activity and contribute to the area's identity.

3 Schools
+1 University
+1 Technical College
= An Educational Hub

FIGURE 12 - SCHOOL PARCELS



Mercer University owns a large area in the center of the study area and there is a concentration of schools in the study area. Education makes up over 30% of the district. Schools are hotspots of activity, and improved connectivity to schools can provide safer access and a more inviting environment. More efficient transportation, safer pedestrian infrastructure, and improved connectivity to schools can support ease of access to education and quality for life of parents, children, and university students alike.

0 500 1000

SCALE: 1"=1000'

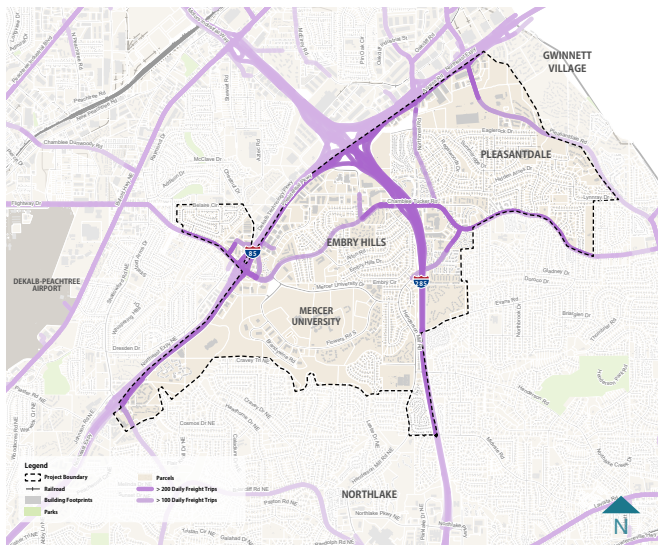


Traffic and Transportation

Heavily influenced by the major corridors of I-285, I-85, Chamblee-Tucker Road, and Pleasantdale Road, the study area sees peak-hour congestion driven by commuter traffic, industrial activity, and access to nearby business districts.

This region functions as an important connector between residential neighborhoods, light industrial zones, and commercial centers. Limited walkability and transit service compared to more urban parts of metro Atlanta increase transportation pressures.

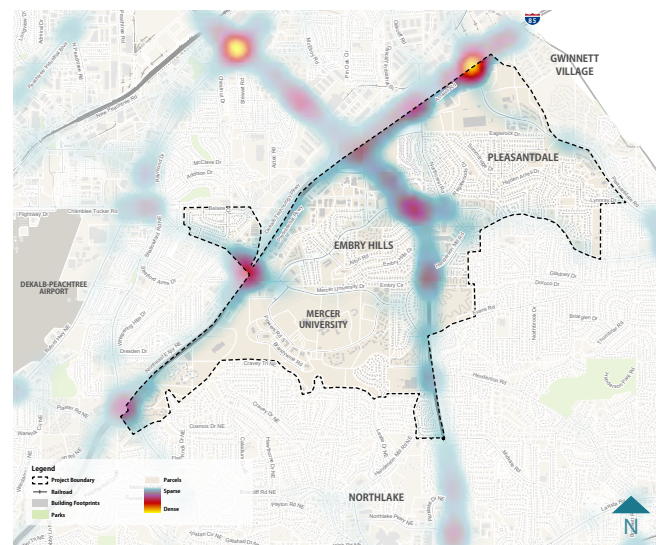
FIGURE 13 - FREIGHT



Freight travels along major roads throughout the study district, such as Chamblee-Tucker Road, Northcrest Road, Pleasantdale Road, Shallowford Road, and some along Evans Road. Freight travel also occurs along I-85 and I-285. Freight transportation creates increased risks and conflicts for pedestrians and cyclists. Despite the freight traffic, transit routes and stops occur on Chamblee-Tucker Road.

0 500 1000
SCALE: 1"=1000'

FIGURE 14 - CRASH DENSITY

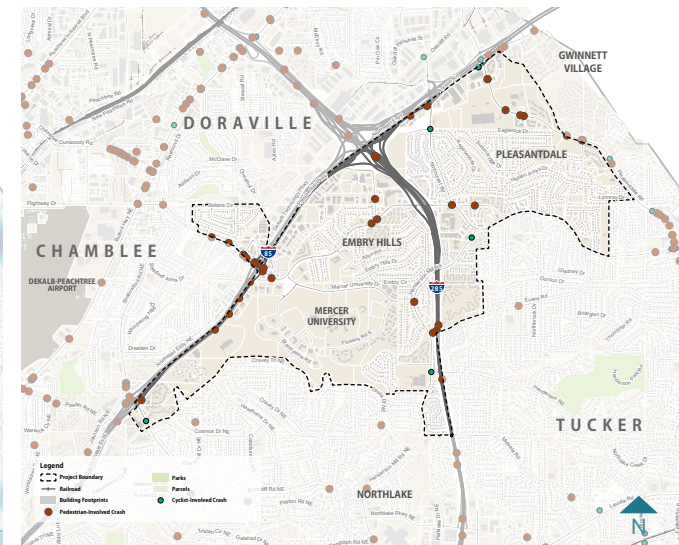


The majority of crashes occur along 285 and at intersections of 85. These intersections are high conflict areas, as they feature increased pedestrian use and higher likelihood of crashes. Outside of the highway, the highest crash intersections include:

- Intersection of Chamblee-Tucker and Northcrest (147)
- Outside Pleasantdale Park along Shallowford Road (143)
- Intersection of Chamblee-Tucker and Mercer University (108)

Strategic Location At Crossroads Of I-85 & I-285

FIGURE 15 - PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST INVOLVED CRASHES



The intersection of Chamblee-Tucker Road and I-85 is highly dangerous, with many pedestrian related crashes. Crashes also concentrate at the intersection of I-85 and Shallowford Road. The pedestrian involved crashes near the center of the district are of interest as they do not match the characteristics of other crashes, which are located at intersections with the highways.



Mobility and Accessibility

MARTA bus service is available in the area, though sidewalk infrastructure and pedestrian connectivity is fragmented. Despite proximity to Doraville MARTA, the immediate area remains heavily auto-oriented.

FIGURE 17 - NEXT GEN TRANSIT ROUTES

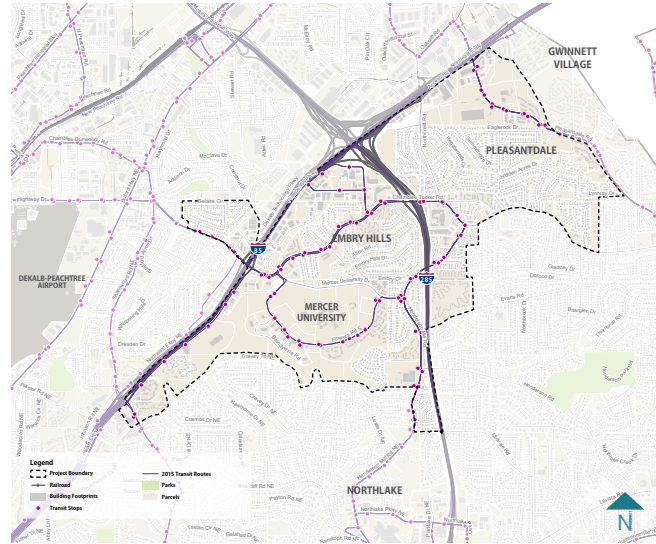


Updates to bus routes and stops are coming to the Atlanta area in April of 2026 - with implications for mobility and transit in the study area. Bus Routes and stops are located within the study area and will be along Chamblee-Tucker road, Pleasantdale Road, and Henderson Mill Road. Future BRT is also expected along I-285. Buses will no longer run along Flowers Road.

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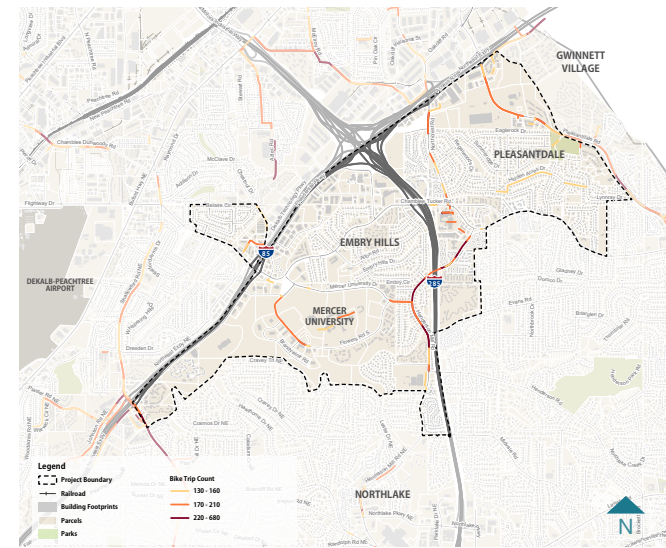
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FIGURE 18 - CURRENT TRANSIT ROUTES AND STOPS



Current bus routes and stops are located within the study area, a major feature along Chamblee-Tucker road. The majority of the district is within a quarter of a mile from a bus stop. The exception to this is to the northeast of the study area, with a majority of the single family housing in that region lacking access to bus routes.

FIGURE 16 - BIKE TRIPS



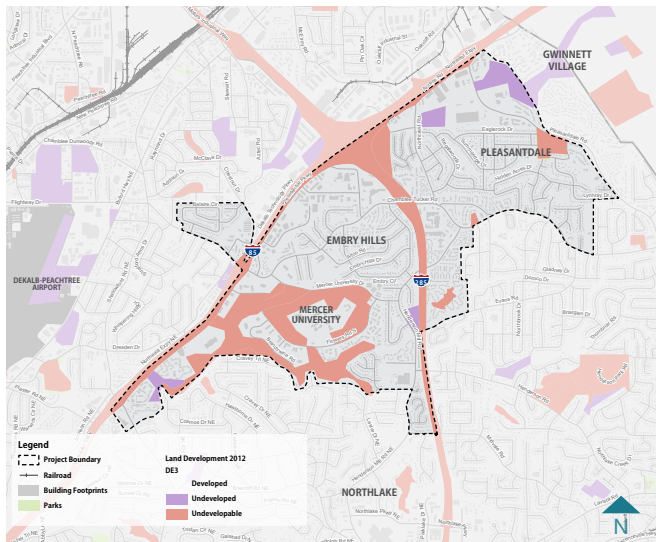
Bike trips concentrate along Henderson Mill Road, Pleasantdale Road, NorthCrest Road, and Shallowford Road. There is some cycling activity around the university as well.



Development Opportunities and Constraints

The study area includes a significant amount of unbuildable land and aging infrastructure, which presents challenges for future growth. Features such as highway rights-of-way, Mercer University property, and brownfield sites create physical barriers and limit opportunities for new development. Much of the existing building stock dates back to the 1960s and 1970s, with older commercial and industrial uses primarily concentrated along major highway corridors. Together, these conditions shape where and how redevelopment can occur within the area.

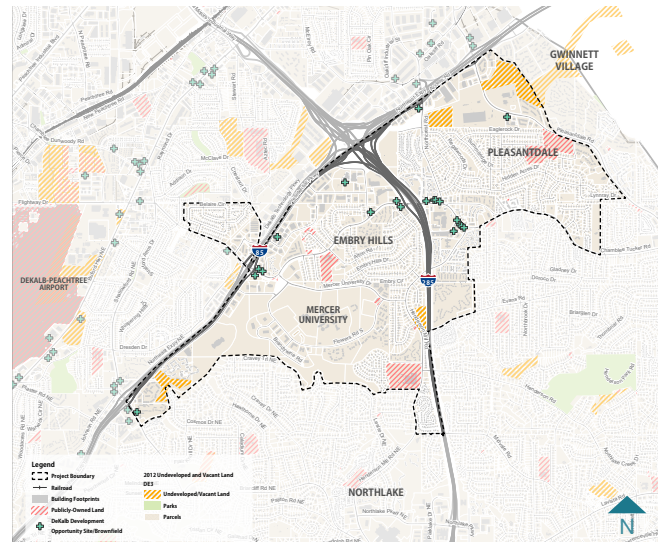
FIGURE 19 - UNDEVELOPED AND UNBUILDABLE



Unbuildable areas include public parks, the Mercer University Property and some areas within water bodies. Some of the undeveloped areas are within floodplain or wetland, which limiting the development possibilities. Areas surrounding floodplain and state waters are difficult for development due to increased land buffers, likelihood of variances needed, added time, and approval requirements.

0 500 1000
SCALE: 1"=1000'

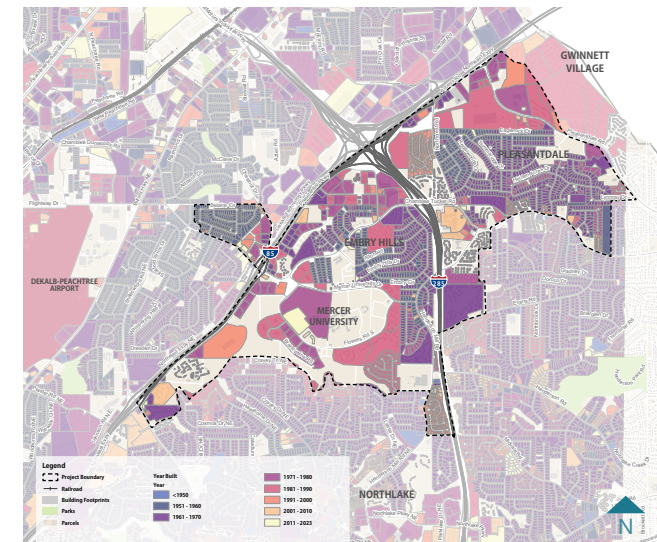
FIGURE 20 - VACANT AND PUBLIC LAND



The undeveloped and vacant land in the site area is almost entirely in the floodplain, and some within the wetlands. Land in the floodplain can be used for recreational amenities, such as the proposed trail or other park amenities. or especially as there is higher density housing surround it. Public lands in the district include the Henderson Middle School, a technical college, a fire station, and Graves Park.

1960s-80s Common age of buildings in the area

FIGURE 21 - BUILDING AGE



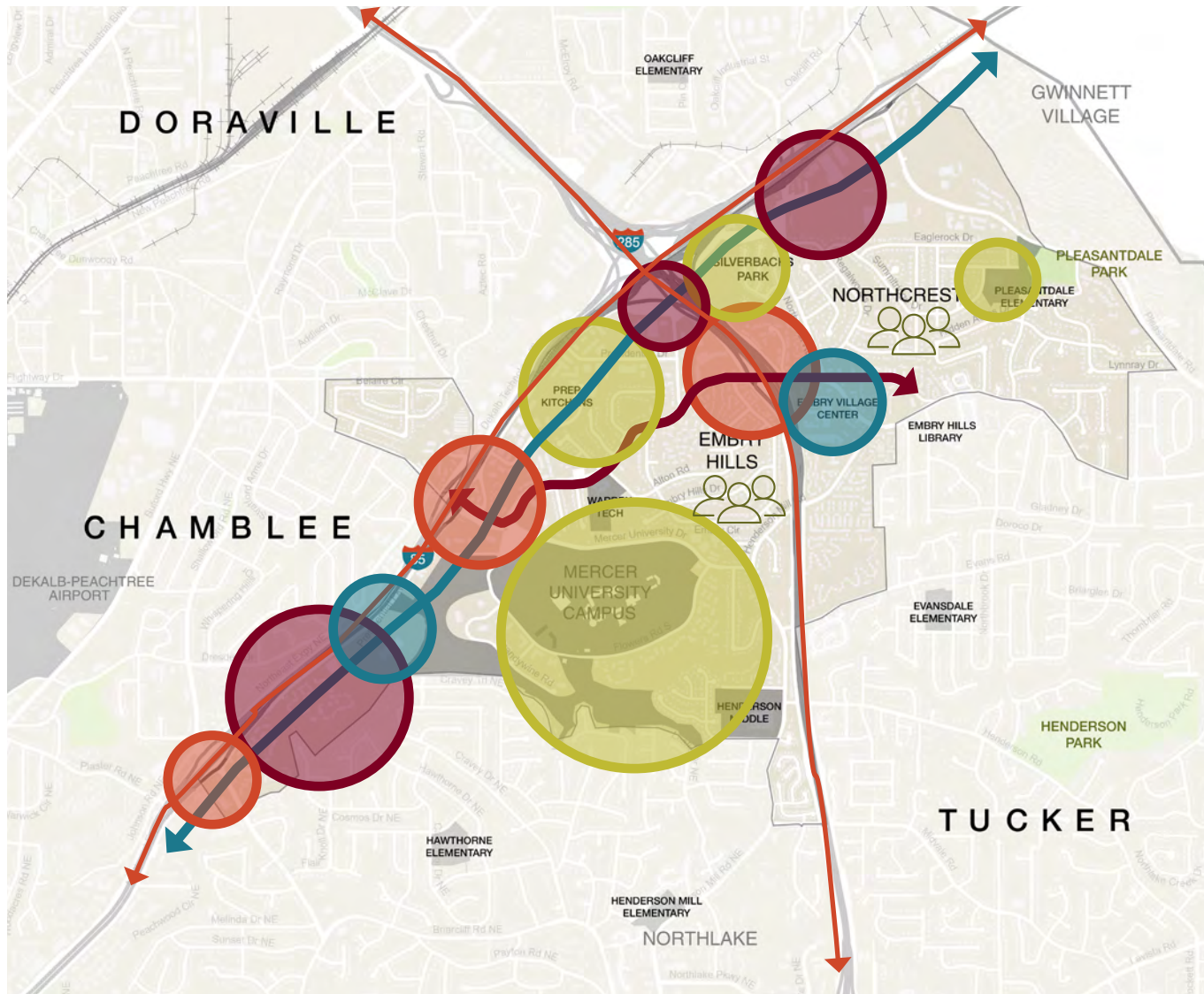
This district features aging buildings, many lacking strong architectural character, which presents an opportunity for future development or redevelopment in the area. As housing ages, updates and infrastructural improvements are necessary.

SWOT Analysis and Findings

Following a comprehensive review of site conditions, all findings were overlaid and synthesized into a SWOT analysis. This process condenses complex information into a focused set of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, highlighting the most important factors influencing the corridor and guiding the direction of the plan.



SWOT Map



WEAKNESSES

- Lack of sidewalk connectivity and overall walkability
- Lack of defined regional identity
- Conflicts between pass through travel and residents
- I-85 and I-285 as a major barrier
- Lack of access to greenspace
- Car oriented streets with many curb cuts and conflict points
- Large amount of floodplain area and wetlands.
- Limited bike infrastructure



STRENGTHS

- I-85 and I-285 providing visibility and connection
- Education centers including: Mercer University, Warren Technical School, Henderson Middle School, Pleasantdale Elementary School
- Existing neighborhood pride & historic neighborhoods
- Development planned for multiple areas
- Destination Developments such as: Silverbacks Park, PREP Kitchen, PATL, Central Rock Gym
- Community diversity



OPPORTUNITIES

- Future regional hub and town center
- Alignment with existing and proposed trail networks. Including the Peachtree Creek Greenway expansion
- Existing momentum from new development
- Numerous large, vacant, underutilized parcels



THREATS

- Aging infrastructure
- Aging commercial building stock
- Possibility to be defined by neighboring regions rather than own identity
- Growing unhoused population
- Increasing housing prices
- High concentration of crashes along key intersections
- Poor streetscape environments specifically Chamblee-Tucker with freight, commercial, and residential traffic conflicts

In Summary

The study area presents a range of opportunities and constraints that will shape its future growth. Its strategic location near major highways and regional destinations creates strong potential for connectivity and redevelopment, particularly along key corridors. At the same time, physical barriers such as highway infrastructure, unbuildable land, and environmental constraints limit development opportunities and connectivity between neighborhoods. Balancing these factors will be critical to guiding thoughtful growth that enhances access, supports reinvestment, and strengthens the overall character of the area.



CULTURAL POTENTIAL:

The study area is home to local artists, civic spaces, and untold stories offering rich opportunities for cultural identity.



INSTITUTIONAL ANCHORS:

Major institutions like Mercer University and the ITP Tennis Center bring daily activity and visibility to the area.



AGING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Older development present opportunities for placemaking, adaptive reuse, and branding.



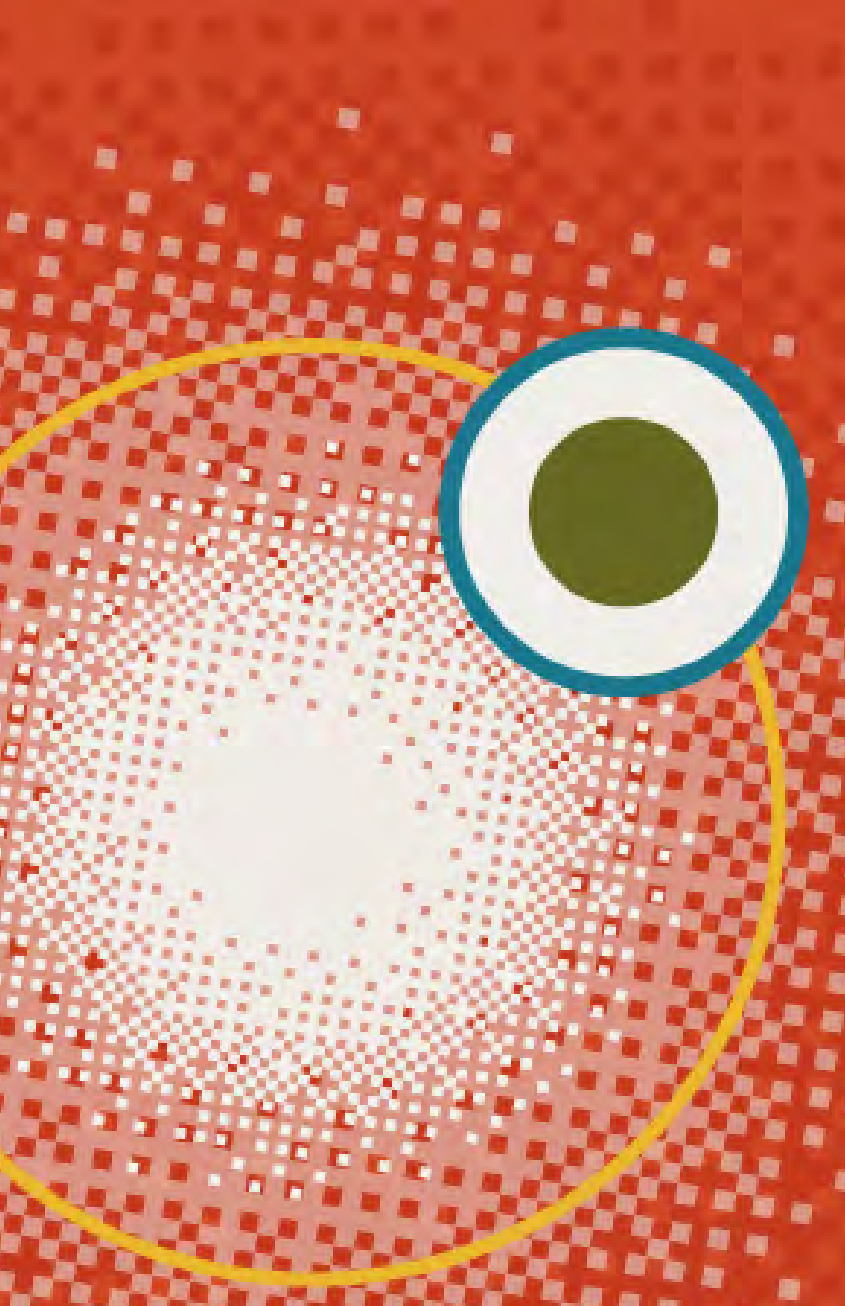
DIVERSE + HISTORIC COMMUNITY:

The multicultural, multigenerational population here is rooted in mid-century neighborhoods with deep ties to place.

A decorative pattern of small squares in various shades of orange and red, arranged in a grid-like fashion, occupies the left side of the slide.

CHAPTER 2

Community, Culture, & Creative Voices



2.1

ENGAGEMENT GOALS & FRAMEWORK

Outreach Overview

DeKalb County and the project management team used a variety of outreach and community engagement methods to invite and collect input from residents, business owners, workers, students, and visitors from Embry Hills, Presidential Parkway, and surrounding areas.



Project Advisory Group



Walk Audit



Surveys and Digital Engagement



Pop-Up Events



Design Workshops



Open House



Artist Engagement

The planning team centered the engagement process, including communications materials, input activities, and types of events, around ensuring equitable access and opportunity for input.

Outreach included a mailing list (members of the public who signed up for updates), church bulletin posts, targeted emails to community stakeholders, and multi-lingual canvassing in the community. Intercept outreach was conducted at the Embury Hills Library's Monthly Book Sale and the District 1 Can Food Drive and Paper Shredding Event at Pleasantdale Park.



Connecting with Community Anchors, Institutions, and Artists

The study area boasts a variety of land uses, including a public library, several places of worship, single family and multi-family residential neighborhoods, a variety of commercial services, and regional destinations such as the Mercer University Atlanta Campus, Silverbacks Park, and major employers. Given this land use diversity, the planning team executed an engagement plan that aspired to hear from longtime residents, seniors, transient populations such as Mercer students, small business owners, companies with a large footprint (e.g., UPS Pleasantdale Hub), and people who visit the area for shopping, dining, worship, and sports, and other activities.

- The planning team collected broad-based community input and facilitated **targeted discussions with major stakeholders** such as Mercer University, property management representatives from the District at Chamblee, and various other business owners located throughout the district.
- The **Project Advisory Group** involved representatives from neighboring jurisdictions, MARTA, the Center for Pan-Asian Community Services, Embry Hills Civic Association, and other groups.
- The planning team identified and engaged with a **collection of local artists** throughout the planning process. Their insights and feedback supported a number of public art recommendations identified in this plan.
- The **mural-based activity** facilitated by an artist at Design Workshop 2 furthered the project's goals of supporting local art while involving the community in a unique participatory engagement format.

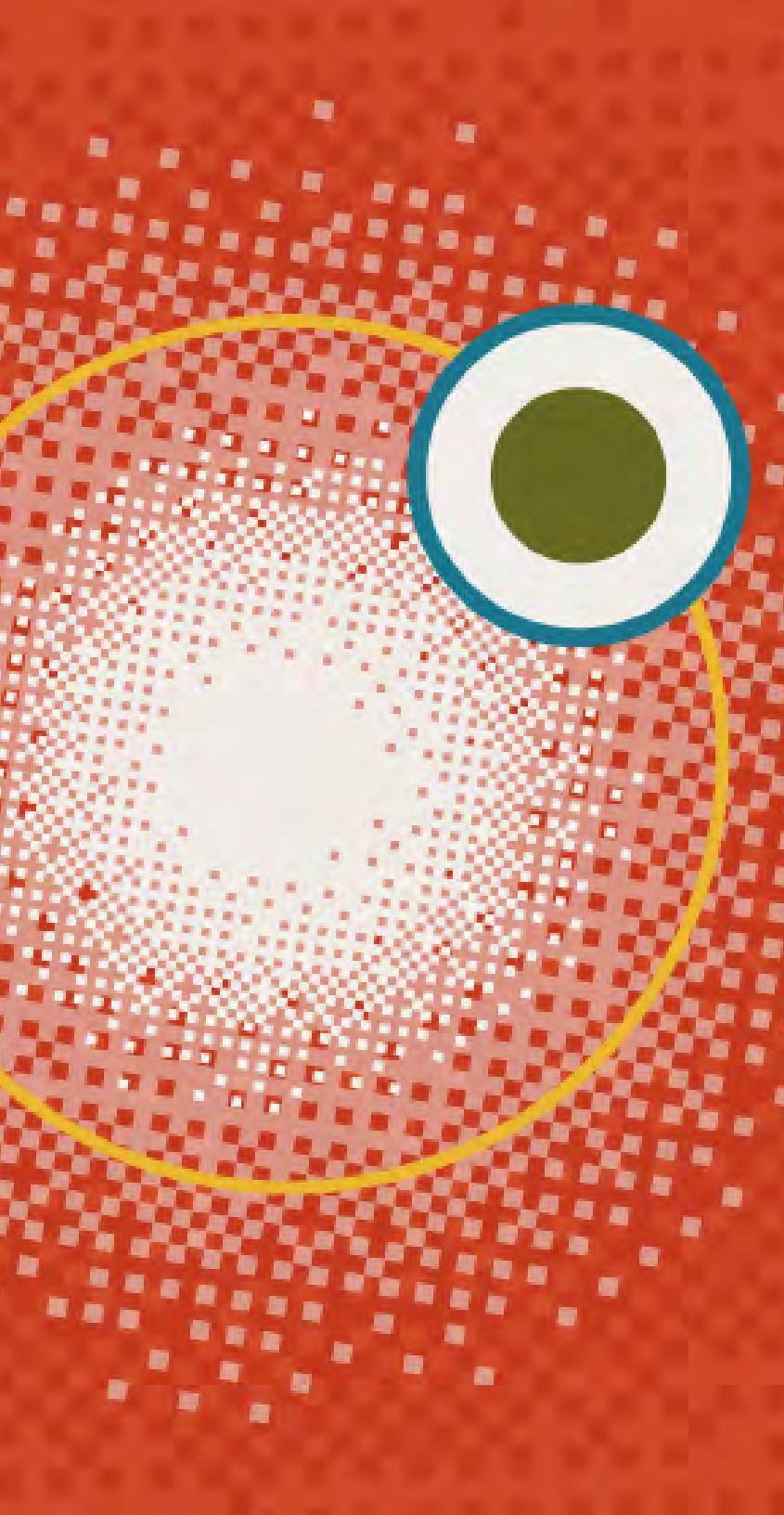
The following community anchors and institutions were leveraged to promote the planning effort to different population segments:

COMMUNITY ANCHORS & INSTITUTIONS

EMBRY HILLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MOUNTAIN WEST CHURCH
EMBRY HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST
MERCER UNIVERSITY
WARREN TECHNICAL SCHOOL
HENDERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL
CHAMBLEE FOOD MART
BLUE RIBBON GRILL

SILVERBACKS PARK
ITP TRAINING ACADEMY
NORTHCREST GOLF SHOP
BRITO MARKET
LATIN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
THE CITY FARMER'S MARKET
MEDITERRANEAN BAKERY
TANY'S MARKET TIENDA LATINA





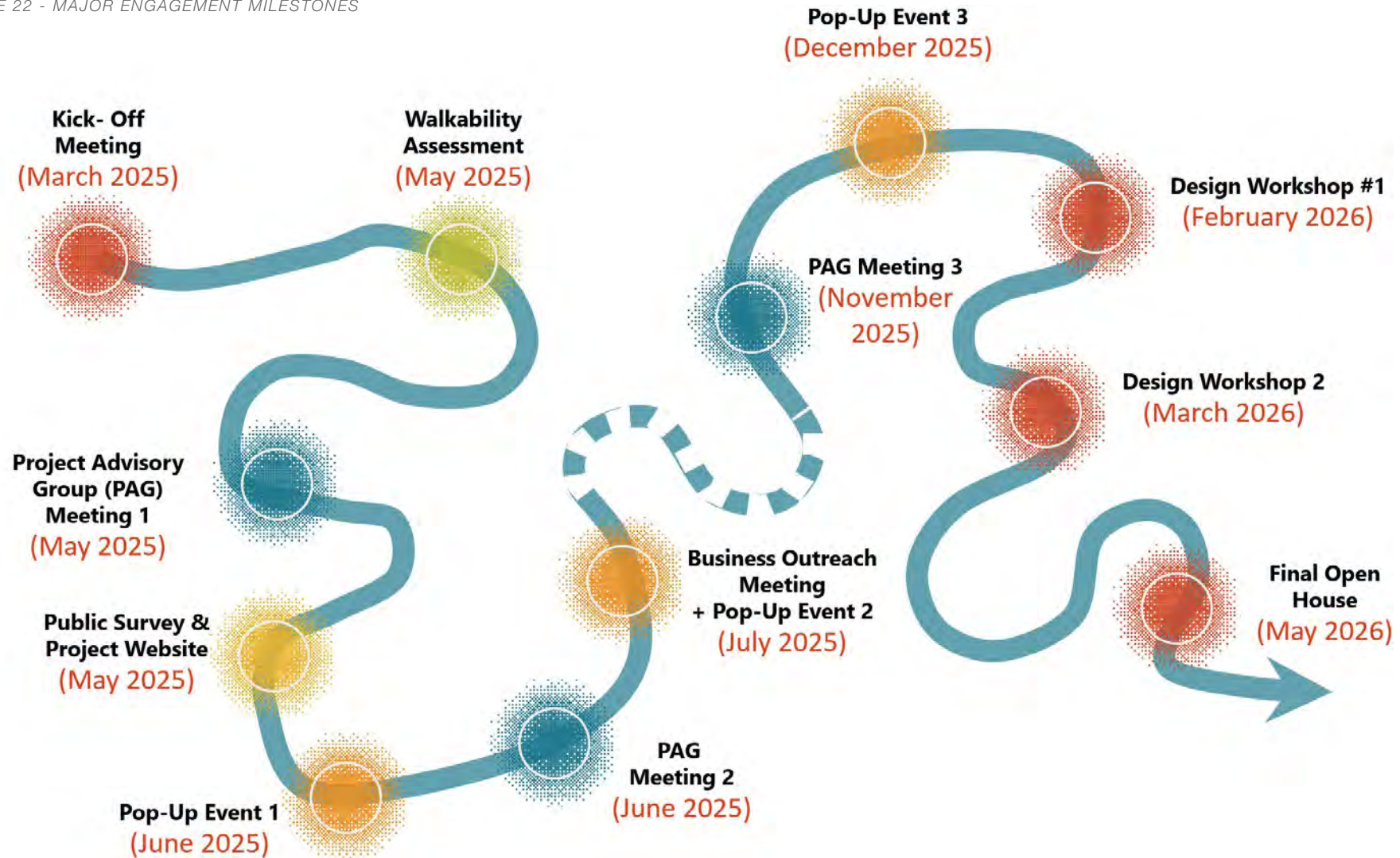
2.2

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

Engagement Activities Overview

The planning process included a variety of community engagement activities from project kick-off in March 2025 through the plan's completion in May 2026, as shown in the figure below. A brief project pause, indicated by the hashed line, took place between August and October 2025 while the County's leadership expanded the project's scope and study area.

FIGURE 22 - MAJOR ENGAGEMENT MILESTONES





Project Advisory Group (PAG) Meetings

June 10, July 31, & November 29, 2025

The Project Advisory Group included individuals from key groups, communities, and businesses in the area. Meetings invited discussion, feedback, and provided insight into the actionable steps desired by the community. The group helped identify key areas of opportunity, set priorities, and promote the public survey and community engagement events to garner feedback from residents and other stakeholders of the study area.



Walkability Assessment

The project management team conducted a tour of the study area (walking through some portions and driving through others) to ground themselves in the area's conditions. By walking major corridors, the team observed the following challenges:

- Gaps in sidewalk in key locations
- Highly trafficked areas with limited safety infrastructure
- Areas of conflict between different types of users such as pedestrians and vehicular users



FIGURE 23 - MULTIPLE CYCLISTS CROSSING THE I-285 OVERPASS



FIGURE 24 - COWPATH AT CHAMBLEE-TUCKER ROAD



FIGURE 25 - HIGH TRAFFIC AND HIGH PEDESTRIAN USE AREAS



FIGURE 26 - BROKEN LIGHTED CROSSING INFRASTRUCTURE

Surveys and Digital Engagement

PROJECT WEBSITE

Active throughout planning process

The project website provided a hub for people to learn about the project-hosted events and other opportunities to engage with the plan.

COMMUNITY SURVEYS

Long-Form Community Survey Active from May 2025 - February 2026

The project website hosted the project's primary Community Survey from May 2025 to February 2026. This survey gathered information on opportunities and challenges related to placemaking, respondents' relationship with the district, and optional demographic questions. See page 48 for highlights.

Short Activity-Based Surveys following Design Workshops (February and March 2026)

Following each of the two design workshops, a three-week input period helped capture additional feedback through an online survey. For the February Design Workshop input period, a digital survey collected additional input on branding and identity. For the March Workshop input period, a digital survey replicated the community mural activity that an artist facilitated at the in-person meeting.

IDEAS WALL

Active throughout planning process

The project website hosted a digital "Ideas Wall," which included the following prompt: **"What words come to mind to describe this area? What do you want the area to look like in the next 10 to 20 years? What changes? What stays the same?"** Using this easy input tool, community members were able to share ideas, submit photos, and comment upon other community members' ideas.



Online Survey

Your voice will help shape the future of this area!

Click [here](#) to take this 10-min survey.



Call For Artists

Are you an artist who lives, works, or plays in the study area? Do you have an idea about how art can shape the future vision of this area? We would love to connect with you!

Click [here](#) to contact the project team.



Ideas Wall

Your ideas can include anything—from transportation and connectivity improvements, to public art, to the types of businesses you'd like to see along specific corridors. Don't hold back—**think big!** Submit your idea [here](#) through our idea wall!

BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

BUSINESS-FOCUSED COMMUNITY DESIGN EVENT & POP-UP 2

July 28, 2025

- Held at the Mediterranean Bakery from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Discussed streetscape improvements along Henderson Mill Road, Chamblee Tucker Road, and major gateways such as Mercer University and Presidential Parkway
- Gained feedback on what interventions business leaders would most like to see in the area and any challenges or opportunities
- Engaged the broader public on the progress of the small area plan and continued to generate engagement through the survey
- Over 35 community members attended

“Fix Chamblee Tucker. Make it safe to cross, walk, and drive.”

“We need real gathering places, parks, plazas, green spaces where people can be.”

“Mercer is our front door. Let it feel like an entrance, not an afterthought.”

EMBRY HILLS & PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY ARTS AND CULTURE SMALL AREA PLAN

DeKalb County is studying how to enhance the community through arts and culture initiatives and public realm improvements. We would love to hear from you in this process!

Business-Focused Community Design Meeting
Members of the public are welcome!

WHEN: Monday, July 28th from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

WHERE: Mediterranean Bakery - 3362 Chamblee Tucker Rd

WHY: To discuss streetscape improvements along Henderson Mill Road, Chamblee Tucker Road, and major gateways such as Mercer University and Presidential Parkway

DeKalb County
ROBERT PATRICK
COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT
Decide DeKalb
Development Authority

Scan the QR code to register for the event or visit:
EngageDeKalb.DeKalbCountyGA.gov/eh-pres-pkwy

FIGURE 27 - PROMOTIONAL FLYER



TOPIC-SPECIFIC FOCUS GROUPS

TRAILS FOCUS GROUP

January 9, 2026

- Participants included DeKalb County Department of Public Works (Transportation Division); DeKalb County Department of Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Affairs; Mercer University; PATH Foundation; Perez Planning & Design
- Focus on learning status of various trail projects and related transportation improvements
- Shared progress of placemaking work

HOUSING FOCUS GROUP

March 9th, 2026

- The planning and consultant team met with housing experts to gain insight on the housing needs for the study area
- Discussion included how to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing in the area, LIHTC (Low Income Housing Tax Credit) Properties, and senior housing
- This focus group helped identify key housing strategies, challenges, and opportunities

ARTIST FOCUS GROUP

January 20, 2026

The Artist Focus Group brought together a diverse group of local creatives, community members, and stakeholders to share ideas about how public art can help shape the future of the area and this plan. Participants included muralists, painters, photographers, installation artists, business owners, and residents, all representing a range of perspectives and creative disciplines. Grounded in a shared vision for vibrant, inclusive, and culturally rooted artwork, participants emphasized that communities within the study area have a unique history and strong sense of community but lack visible markers that communicate this identity.

Artists discussed the importance of naming, signage, and iconic installations that could serve as recognizable landmarks, as well as opportunities for art to support functionality, improve pedestrian safety, and activate underutilized spaces. Ideas ranged from seating near transit stops and art in intersections for traffic calming, to creative installations in parking lots and commercial areas. Several artists stressed that meaningful public art should be participatory, suggesting community paint-alongs, youth engagement, and co-creation opportunities that invite residents to help shape final outcomes.

The second portion of the discussion focused on partnerships and long-term collaboration. While participants shared examples of existing engagement—such as informal artist networks, studio collectives, school-based programs, and community events—these efforts remain largely grassroots and fragmented, underscoring a need for more intentional coordination. Artists expressed interest in stronger collaboration with schools, youth programs, and local businesses, and emphasized that partnerships with DeKalb County should include clear communication, accessible opportunities to propose ideas, and transparency around funding and expectations. Participants also noted that equitable compensation, recognition, and visibility are critical for sustaining artist involvement, and highlighted the value of tools such as an artist directory, ongoing submission opportunities beyond formal RFPs, and clear guidelines for public art projects.

Area currently lacks visible markers to communicate identity

Public art can support safety & functionality

Art is an opportunity for public engagement and creation

Pop-Ups

POP-UP EVENTS 1 & 2

June 11, 2025 & July 28, 2025

- Located outside Mediterranean Bakery at the North Hills Shopping Plaza, an area that serves a wide variety of users
- Focused on broad community engagement
- Introduced project goals, gathered input on area needs and public art preferences, gathered feedback on public realm improvements desired by community, and generated engagement for the online survey
- Invited conversations with Commissioner Patrick and the planning team
- Over 30 community members attended each pop-up

POP-UP EVENT 3

December 15, 2025

- Located at the Embry Hills United Methodist Church
- Focus on engagement with parents, Spanish speakers, and community members who frequent the area for worship, youth activities, or other community events
- Introduced project goals, gathered input on challenges and opportunities in the study area and generated engagement for the online survey
- Invited conversations with Commissioner Patrick and the planning team
- About 15 community members attended
- Raised awareness with an additional 40+ cars in the preschool carpool line



Design Workshops

DESIGN WORKSHOP 1

February 12, 2026

- Located at the Mountain West Church - Chamblee campus
- Focused on broad community engagement
- Invited conversations with Commissioner Patrick and the community through a townhall-style Question & Answer period
- Gathered community testimonials through written comment cards and videos
- Over 20 community members attended

DESIGN WORKSHOP 2

March 25, 2026

- Located at the ITP Training Academy (Tennis, Pickleball, and Paddle Facility)
- Focused on broad community engagement, particularly with users of the area who may not have encountered the planning process before
- Included a participatory mural visioning exercise (led by a resident artist) where community members could reflect their priorities for the area in a tangible form
- Over 30 community members attended



Following each workshop, the planning team extended the reach of the engagement by holding a subsequent three-week input period. English and Spanish informational materials and comment boxes were placed at the Embry Hills Library during each input period to raise awareness among library patrons.

Seventeen additional community members participated and submitted flyers!



Placemaking Strategy - Community Response

Over 250 votes were cast by community members, providing feedback on the types of branding, tactical urbanism, amenities, safety strategies, streetscape improvements, and gateways most valued by the community. These findings are summarized below:

Top 5 Overall:

Small Pocket
Park



Pedestrian
Improvements
at Overpasses



Attractive
Pavers &
Murals



Streetscape
Lighting



Playful
Amenities



Additional amenities desired by the community included a skate park, an indoor swimming pool, and a gathering space including play and picnic areas. There was also a strong preference that public art was done by local artists.

Top 3 by Type:

BRANDING:

Banners Reflecting Key Amenities: 11

Consistent Landscaping at Key Locations: 10

Historic District Designators: 9

AMENITIES:

Playful Amenities (Swinging Benches, String Lights): 19

Educational Signage (Historical or Environmental): 12

Unique Benches or Seating: 14

TACTICAL URBANISM:

Small Pocket Park: 25

Story Wall Mural / Signature Public Art: 12

Painted Crosswalk Series, or Gateway Arch (Tie): 8

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Trail Oriented Development: 12

Mixed Use Developments: 4

Varied Housing Typologies: 3

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Attractive Pavers & Murals: 25

Colorful and Highly Visible Sculptures: 12

District Signage: 8

TACTICAL URBANISM:

Pedestrian Improvements at Overpasses: 25

Streetscape Lighting: 22

Pedestrian Crossing Artwork: 7

Open House

FINAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENT

May 13, 2026

- Located at the District at Chamblee, Gather Building
- A panel was held to discuss implementation and how to make this plan a reality for the district. Panelists included Kristin Allen, Planner at ARC, Commissioner Patrick, and Alejandro Cross from the Latin American Chamber of Commerce
- Focused on informing the community, wrapping up the plan, and getting the last chance for feedback from the community
- Summarized project findings and process
- Gathered feedback on a preferred mural design and highest priority actions from the short to long term
- Approximately 25 community members attended



**EMBRY HILLS -
PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY
& SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES
PLACEMAKING STRATEGY**

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE
Your voice matters!

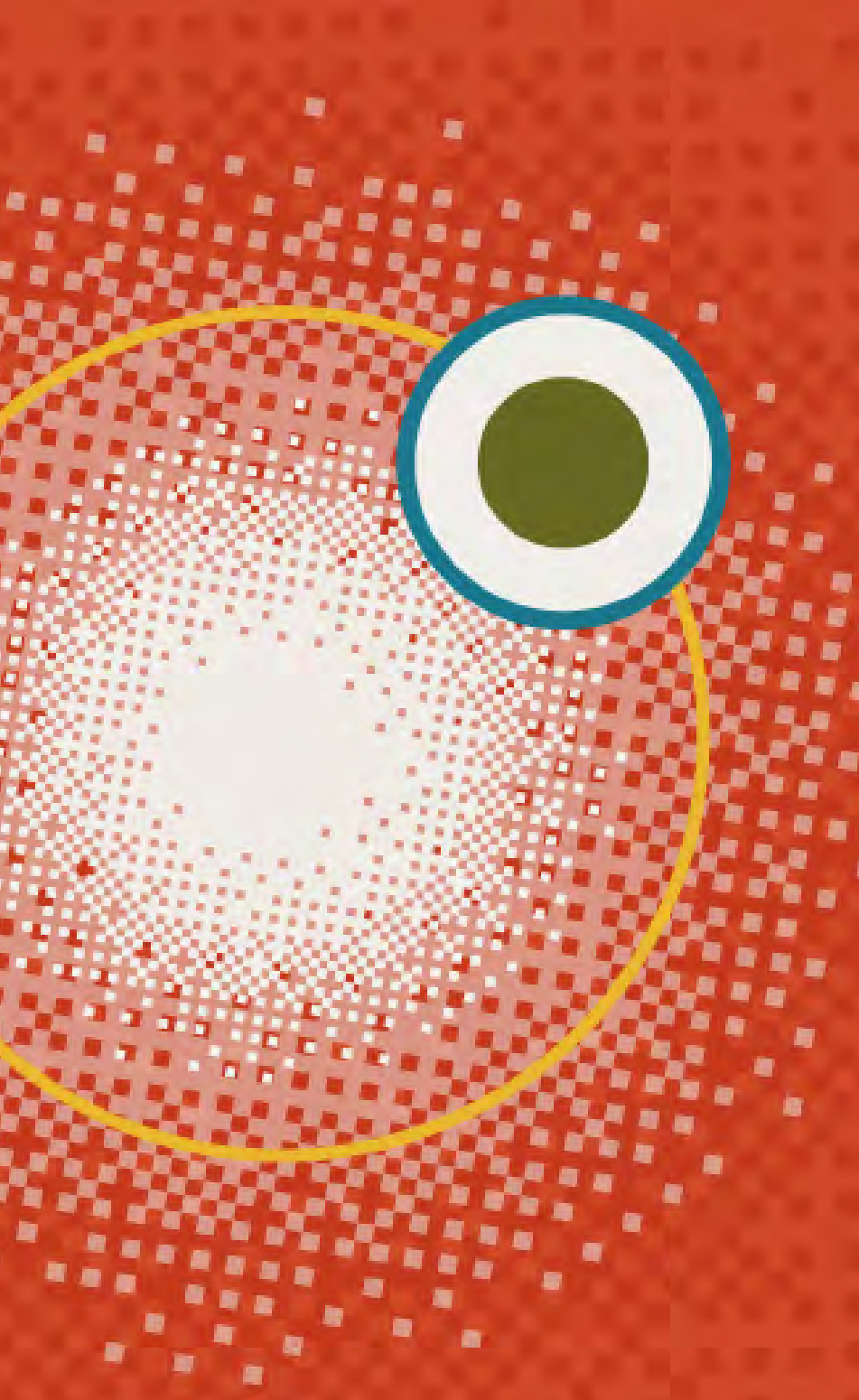
**DRAFT PLAN
PRESENTATION**

**STAKEHOLDER
Q&A
PANEL**

**SHARE YOUR
COMMENTS**

May 13 | 6:00 - 8:00 PM
The District at Chamblee (Gather Building)
2965 Flowers Road S, Atlanta, GA 30341
engagedekalb.dekalbcountyga.gov/eh-pres-pkwy





2.3

ARTIST & CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Engaging Artists

We created strategies for reaching and engaging diverse, local, and emerging artists in the community. One strategy was designing an accessible, low-barrier online form to collect artist information and build a centralized repository. Another strategy included identifying artists both for focused engagement and to provide a starter list of artists for potential collaboration during implementation. This process includes researching and connecting with arts and culture organizations in the study area and surrounding communities; sharing calls for interest via community forums, networks, and newsletters; and directly contacting individual artists, including recent applicants to a neighboring city's mural project. Finally, an artist-focus group was convened to better understand how local artists can be meaningfully involved in implementing the plan's placemaking initiatives, and to gather their input on how public art itself can support the community's broader goals. This session served as a starting point for developing realistic, sustainable strategies for ongoing artist engagement, recognizing the possible limitations in both artist capacity and local infrastructure for arts engagement.

Artist-Led Visioning for Community Mural

Sarah Lawrence, a local resident artist, was brought in to support the community visioning process by developing a participatory art exercise at Design Workshop #2 to inform the design of a mural to be installed at the intersection of Chamblee Tucker Road and Mercer University Drive following the completion of this plan.

As part of the artist-led visioning process, residents participated in a hands-on “Community Tile Activity,” where they selected three of the following attributes identified through the public engagement process as descriptive of their community: **Diverse, Connected, Active, Collaborative, Welcoming, and Rooted**. Participants stacked them in order of importance. The top tile represented their highest priority, creating a clear visual signal of what matters most across the group. Thirty people contributed to this activity at the workshop and twenty more participated in an online version that ran for three weeks following the event.



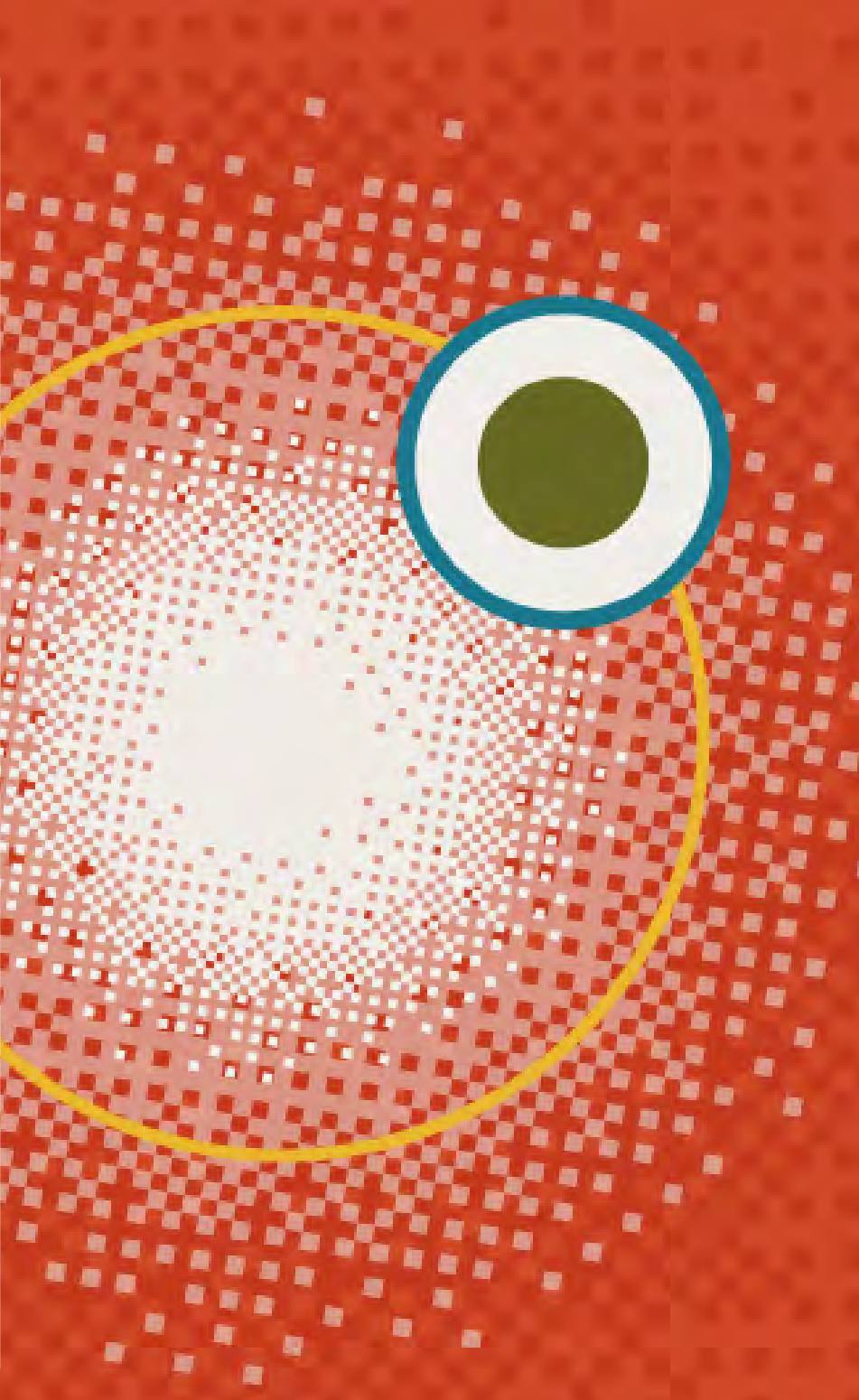
MURAL, CONTINUED

Overall, residents were excited to see public art in their community and took pride in shaping a piece rooted in shared values. The final mural composition translates those individual choices into a unified grid, where layered brushstrokes reflect both personal expression and collective authorship.

Across the responses, warm tones dominate the top position: orange and red were top picks, together accounting for more than half of all selections, corresponding to **“Connected”** and **“Diverse.”** Participants told us that social interaction, cultural richness, and everyday exchange are the community’s strongest shared priorities. Purple (**“Active”**) follows with nine selections, indicating a parallel emphasis on movement, public space, and vitality. Cooler tones appear less frequently: blue (**“Rooted”**), green (**“Welcoming”**), and yellow (**“Collaborative”**) each showed up only a handful of times as the top pick but very frequently in the second and third layers, implying these values are widely present but more often function as supporting priorities.

See Chapter 4.2 or additional artist engagement findings and recommendations





2.4

WHAT WE HEARD: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Shared Values

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

From May 2025 to February 2026, the web-based survey gathered public perceptions of the study area and opportunities for the future. Questions asked about the experiences of those who live, work, or play within the study area, opportunities for improvements in the area, and public art needs and preferences. Highlights from the survey findings are shown at right.

Throughout the planning process, participatory design techniques were carried out to bring fresh ideas and perspectives into the placemaking strategy. During three pop-up events and two design workshops, the planning team gathered input through a variety of activities. More detailed summaries of these engagements are found in appendix D, but top recurring themes are presented at right.

Survey Highlights

Top Three Desired Amenities for the Area

1. **Public spaces (parks, playgrounds, open spaces, trails)**
2. **Bike and pedestrian amenities**
3. **Public art installations**



Most Mentioned Words:

Trees

Nature

Community-Oriented Feel

Key Themes Collected through Participatory Design Process

1. **Improve roadway safety**
2. **Celebrate the mix of cultures present in the area**
3. **Encourage trail-oriented development**

What Shaped the Plan

180+
survey responses

9
engagement events

2,250+
total community
members reached
(including website
visitors)

**Responses from local
businesses, community
members, local artists &
stakeholders**

Address safety
and access along
Chamblee Tucker Road
- one of the biggest
challenges in the area

As the front door to the
district, Mercer University
has potential to set the tone
for walkability, placemaking,
signage, and wayfinding that
welcomes people into the area

Preserve the
wetlands

Sidewalk repairs,
overgrown vegetation,
lighting gaps, and
basic upkeep are key
priorities

Begin building
trail segments that
visibly connect to
destinations

Create a
cohesive
identity for the
district

Improve bus stop
amenities, lighting, seating,
and shade, and make it
easier for pedestrians and
cyclists to safely reach and
use transit.

Ensure this plan
connects seamlessly
with neighboring cities'
plans, trail systems,
and redevelopment
strategies

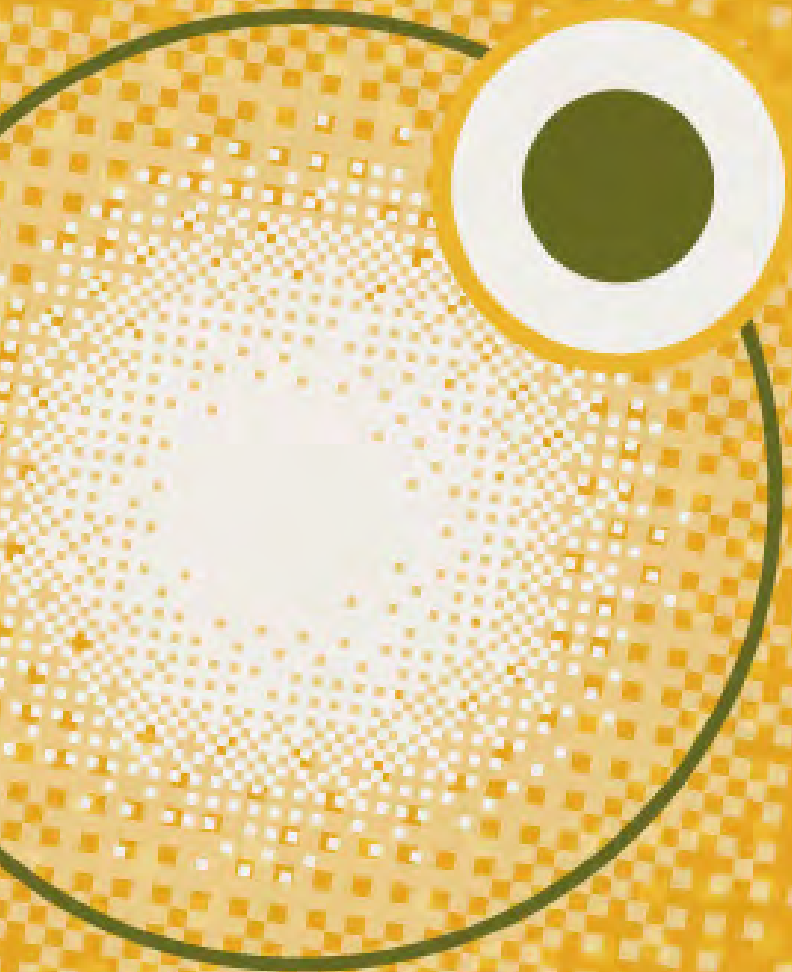
There is a lack of
shared gathering places.
Prioritize new parks,
plazas, and flexible green
spaces

Currently
disconnected: Need
wider and more
connected sidewalks



CHAPTER 3

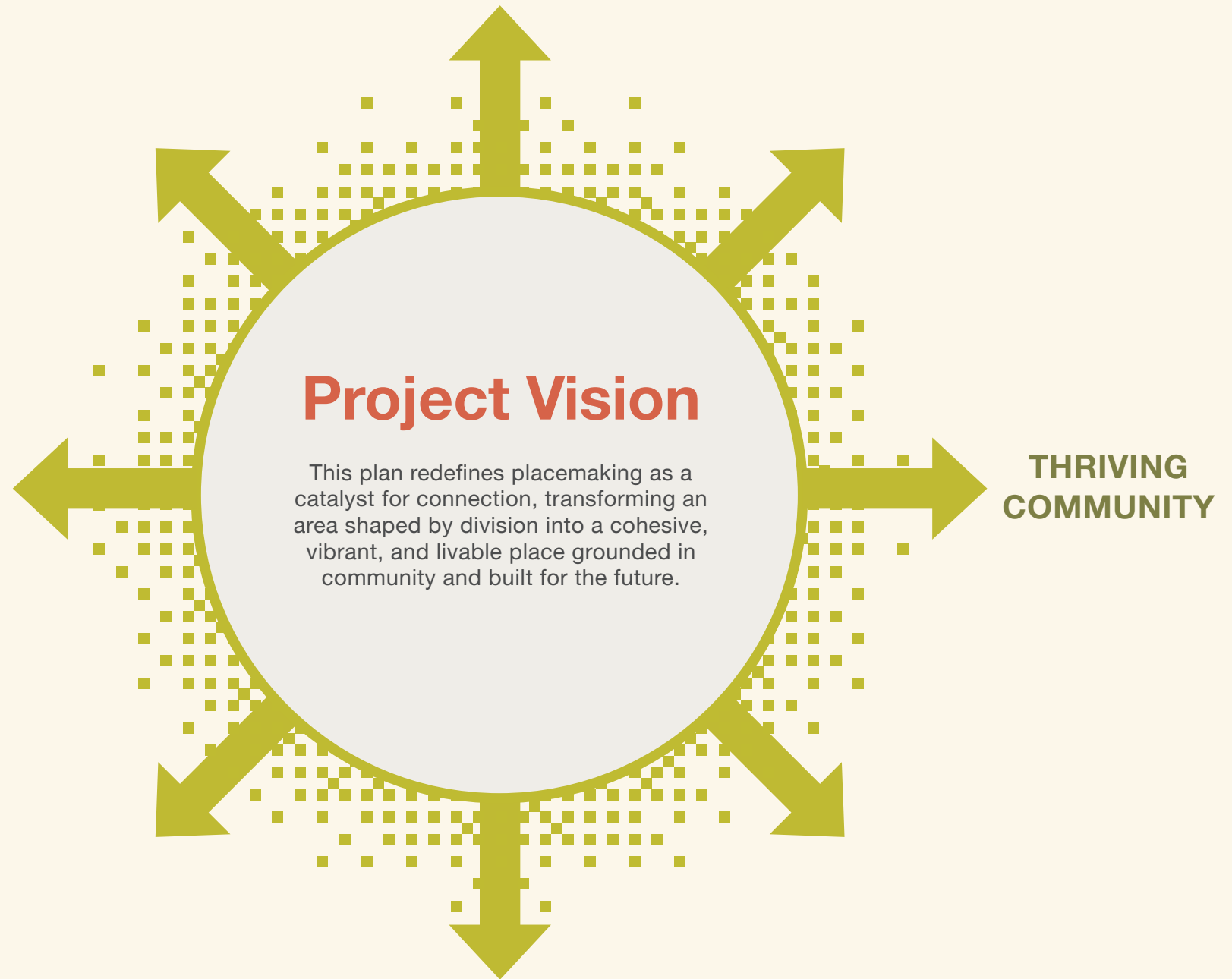
Planning & Mobility Framework



3.1

VISION & FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

Future Visioning



Defining Placemaking

Placemaking is not one-size-fits-all, each community defines what it means based on its identity, culture, and lived experience. At its core, placemaking is about creating meaningful connections between people and place in ways that reflect and strengthen that uniqueness. In the Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway and Surrounding Communities project area, placemaking goes beyond aesthetics. In a place shaped by division, it becomes a tool to reconnect people, spaces, and experiences. Rather than being applied as an overlay, placemaking is embedded in the fundamentals: safer streets, accessible open spaces, and catalytic sites. By embedding placemaking in this way, identify and community align with how the place functions.

This approach is grounded in the voices of residents, workers, and stakeholders, translating local culture and everyday experiences into visible, lasting change.

Placemaking is inclusive and impactful. It relies on the participation of diverse stakeholders, including residents, workers, local organizations, and businesses.

Shaped by community input, the following placemaking tools express how the plan's vision comes to life and are explored in greater detail in Chapter 4.

WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

Identity	Collaboration	Community Pride
Belonging	Activity	Local Investment
Connection	Vibrancy	People-Centered Design

Placemaking looks different across communities, because it is designed to reflect the area's unique culture, character, and history.

-  **VIBRANCY ENHANCEMENTS**
-  **WALL MURALS**
-  **ASPHALT ART AND WAYFINDING**
-  **GATEWAYS AND IDENTITY MARKERS**
-  **ART-INFUSED INFRASTRUCTURE**
-  **SITE-SPECIFIC ARTWORK**

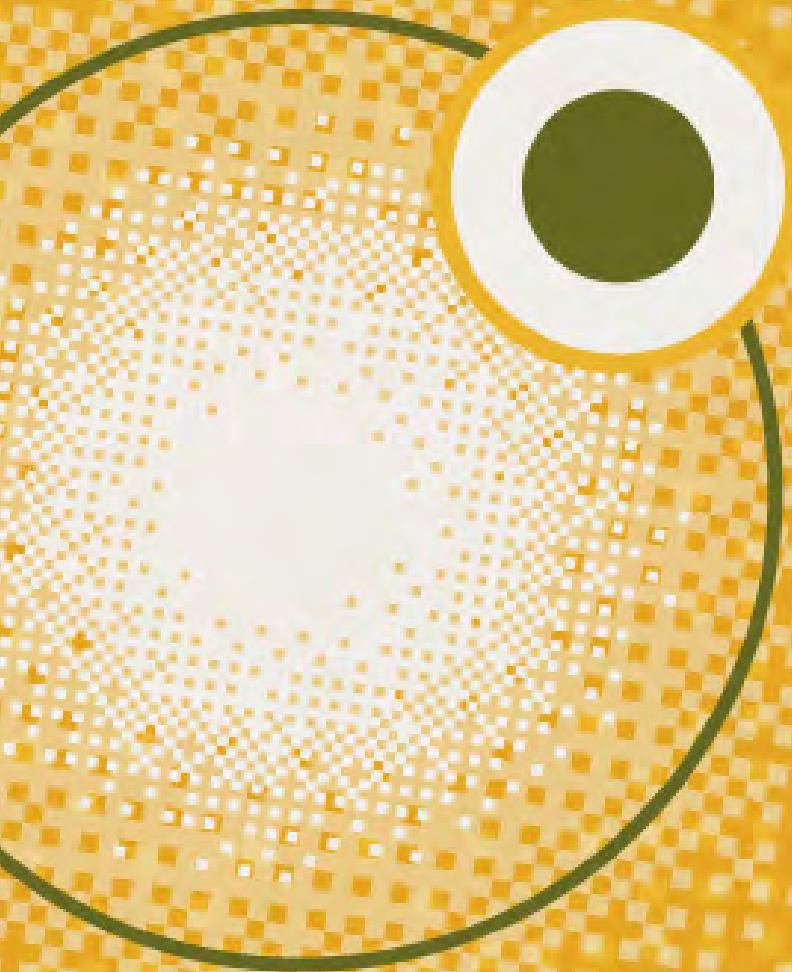
Framework

The proposed framework translates community-defined priorities into a clear, actionable approach for the area. Grounded in what residents and stakeholders identified as most important, it organizes how change will occur across the area.

Together, these priorities shape how placemaking is defined and experienced in this plan, guiding coordinated investments that strengthen connectivity, improve safety, and create a more connected, livable, and thriving community.



See Appendix C for additional information on process, analysis, and recommendations.



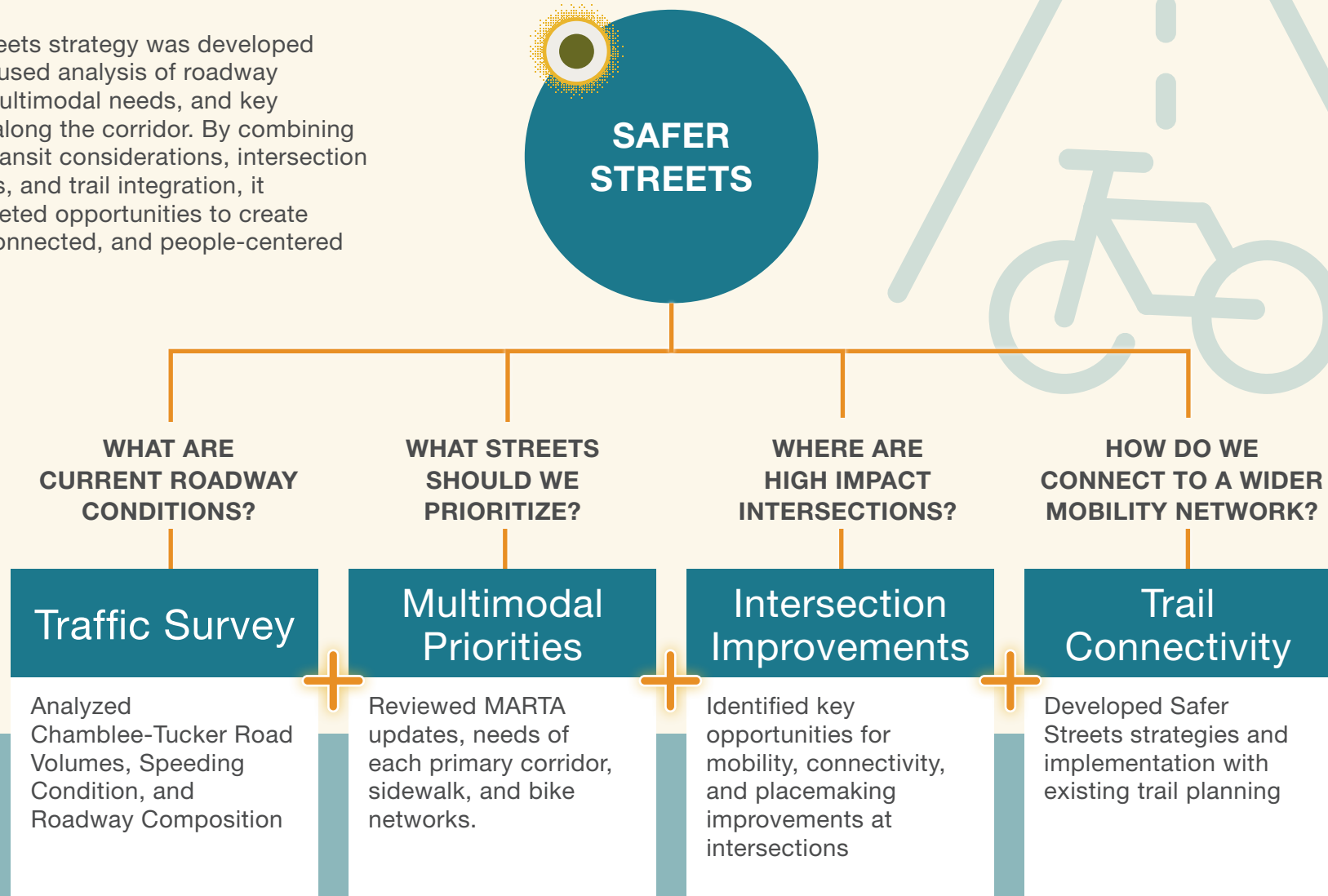
3.2

SAFER STREETS

Active Transportation Analysis

Safer Streets Framework

The Safer Streets strategy was developed through a focused analysis of roadway conditions, multimodal needs, and key connections along the corridor. By combining traffic data, transit considerations, intersection improvements, and trail integration, it identifies targeted opportunities to create safer, more connected, and people-centered streets.



See the Appendix C for more detailed information and analysis.

Existing Infrastructure

Roadway networks provide critical access to businesses, housing, and community services. High volume roadways can create conflicts with pedestrian safety. Corridors with the greatest vehicular trips and pedestrian trips were identified to reveal areas of the greatest conflict. These are highlighted in blue below, and these conflicts reveal a need for improved pedestrian safety and multi-modal infrastructural enhancements.

VEHICULAR TRIPS

Highest Volume - Trips

I-285, Perimeter (140,700)

I-85, Northeast Expressway (115,700)

Chamblee-Tucker Road – West of 85 (56,100)

(Note: Trip volume through Embry Hills averages ~18,000)

Shallowford Road N (45,000)

Henderson Mill Road (38,600)

Pleasantdale Road (38,000)

Henderson Road (25,000)

Northcrest Road (18,500)

Mercer University Drive (13,000)

Flowers Road South (12,000)

PEDESTRIAN TRIPS

Highest Volume - Trips

Shallowford Road N (576)

Flowers Road South (507)

Henderson Mill Road (396)

Pleasantdale Road (371)

Northcrest Road (343)

Chamblee-Tucker Road (287)

DeKalb Technology Parkway (237)

Mercer University Drive (233)

Valleybluff Way (233)

Chestnut Drive (232)

Chamblee-Tucker Road

TRAFFIC SURVEY SUMMARY AND SAFETY FINDINGS

Corridor Context

- Functional Classification: Minor Arterial
- Posted Speed Limit: 35 mph
- Description: Urban Corridor with interchanges, signals, and various access points

Traffic Volumes

- Daily: Approximately 14,600 vehicles per day (two-way)
- Balanced directional split (~51%/49%)
- Peak Hour: Approximately 1,300 vehicles per hour (two-way)

Speed Environment

- Posted Speed Limit: 35 mph
- 85th Percentile Speed: 47 mph
- **+12 mph over posted - systemic speeding condition**

Vehicle Mix

- ~92% passenger vehicles
- ~8% trucks/buses

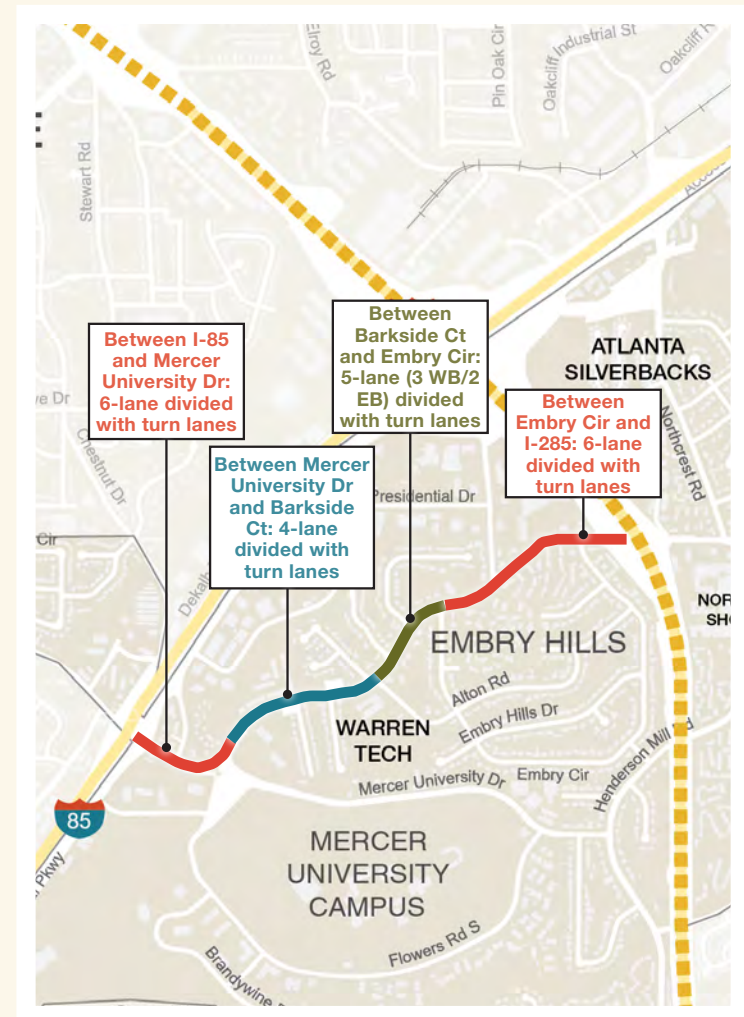


FIGURE 28 - CHAMBLEE-TUCKER ROADWAY ANALYSIS

The Safer Streets Approach:

STEP ONE - CORRIDOR IDENTIFICATION

Roadways within the study area were assessed to understand where corridors with the greatest need were located throughout the region. This analysis considered active trip volumes, active transportation crash history, and the presence of transit routes. Additional corridors with a high concentration of parks, schools, transit stops, and commercial centers were added to this list. This initial analysis resulted in a list of corridors across the study area that displayed the greatest need for improvement. I-85 and I-285 were not considered.

STEP TWO - SCORING

These corridors were then scored using a data-driven prioritization process to provide an objective analysis of which corridors would provide the most benefit to users. Eight prioritization criteria were determined to score corridors, each worth one point, giving a max score of eight points. The graphic at right lists each scoring criteria with a description of the threshold that resulted in a one point score. The highest scoring roadways were identified as priority or Tier 1 corridors for Complete Street improvements. The lower scoring roadways were identified as Tier 2 and 3 for lower-priority projects. While all of these projects are important, this tiered system provides DeKalb County with a general order in which to pursue projects for implementation.

PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA



High Active Trip Volumes

Corridor has a segment with modeled active trip volumes of > 18,000 trips/mi



High Active Transportation Crashes

More than 4 crashes occurred along the corridor



Access to Zero Vehicle Households

Corridor touches a block group with > 25% zero vehicle households



Access to Transit

A transit stop is located along the corridor



Access to Community Destination

Corridor is within 1/4 mile of a park, school, or other activity center



Access to Major Retail Corridor

Corridor has major commercial zoning along the street



Access to Multi-Family Housing

Corridor is within 1/4 mile of multi-family housing zoning



Public Input

Corridors called out during community engagement as key priorities

STEP TWO - SCORING MATRIX

		ID	From Street	To Street	High AT Volumes (>16,000)	Prioritization Criteria							Total Score
						High AT Crash History	Ped-Involved Crash History	Access to Zero Vehicle Households	Access To Transit (NextGen Bus)	Access to Community Destination	Access to Major Retail Corridor	Future Land Use - High Density	
STRATEGY 1 PRIMARY CORRIDORS		Chamblee-Tucker Road	I-85	I-285	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
		Henderson Mill Road	NorthCrest	End of Study Area	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
		Pleasantdale Road	I-85	End of Study Area	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
		Presidential Parkway	Shallowford Road	Buckeye Drive	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	6
STRATEGY 2 SECONDARY CORRIDORS		Mercer University Drive	Chamblee-Tucker	Henderson Mill Road	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	5
		Shallowford Road NE	I-85	End of Study Area	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	5
		Presidential Drive / Buckley	Presidential Parkway	Chamblee-Tucker	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	4
		NorthCrest Road	I-85	End of Study Area	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
		Flowers Road	Mercer University Drive	Mercer University Drive	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
		Henderson Road	Henderson Mill Road	End of Study Area	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

FIGURE 29 - SAFER STREETS STRATEGIES SCORING MATRIX

Safer Streets - Strategy 1

The four primary intersections identified have vastly different recommendations depending on the needs. This plan identifies what is needed to fix each primary road and describes steps to implementation in the implementation chapter.

1.1 CHAMBLEE-TUCKER ROAD

Multi-modal streetscape improvements to improve travel for drivers, pedestrians, and transit riders.

1.2 HENDERSON MILL ROAD

A comfortable pedestrian experience through wider ADA sidewalks, placemaking, and public art.

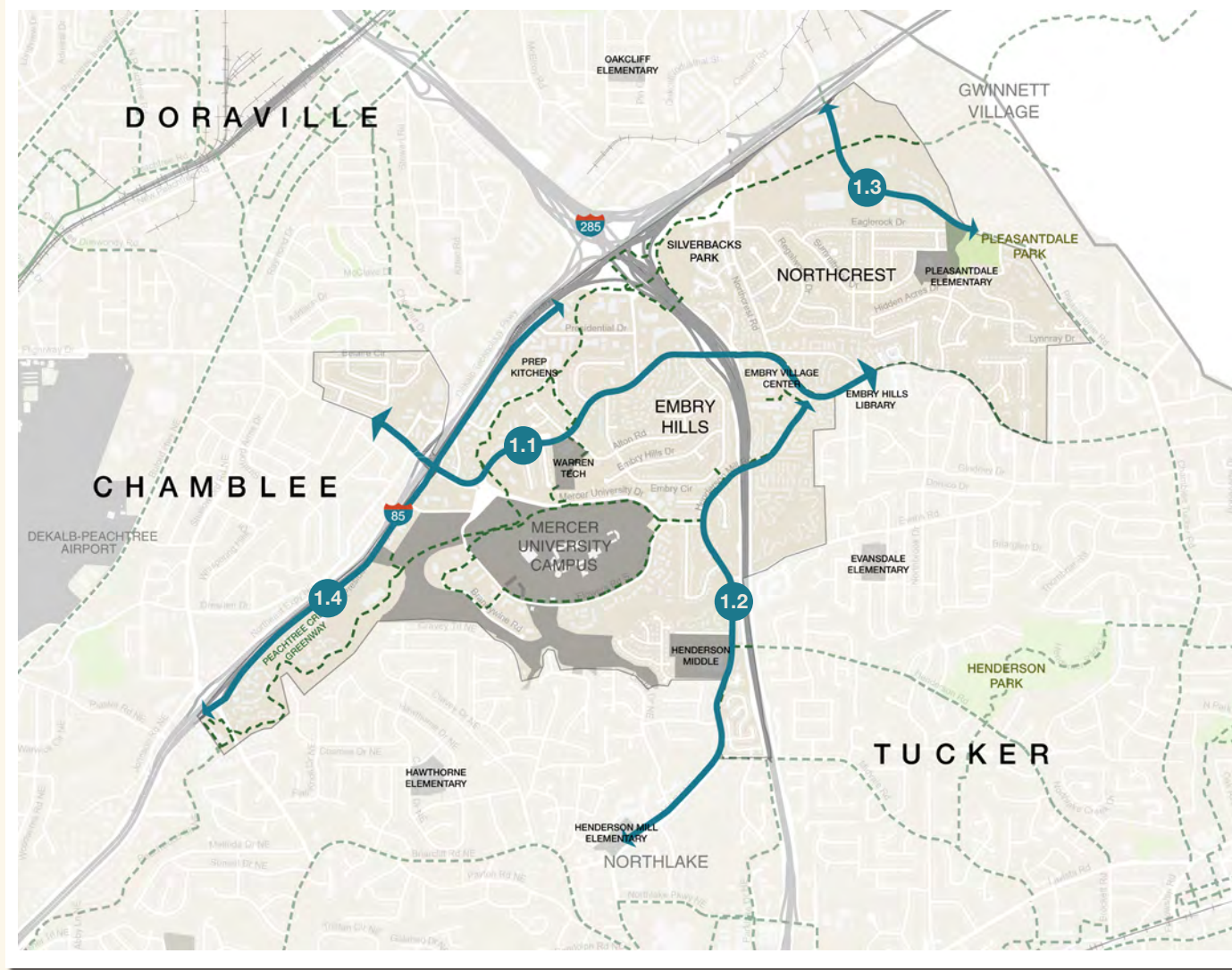
1.3 PLEASANTDALE ROAD

Safe street enhancements through placemaking and pedestrian-oriented installations.

1.4 PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY

Placemaking and urban development standards for a more attractive and welcoming frontage road experience with fully connected sidewalks.

FIGURE 30 - MAIN STREETScape IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY



NORTH

0 1500 3000 6000



SCALE: 1" = 3000'

Pedestrian Enhancement Opportunities - Strategy 2

FIGURE 31 - SECONDARY STREETScape IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

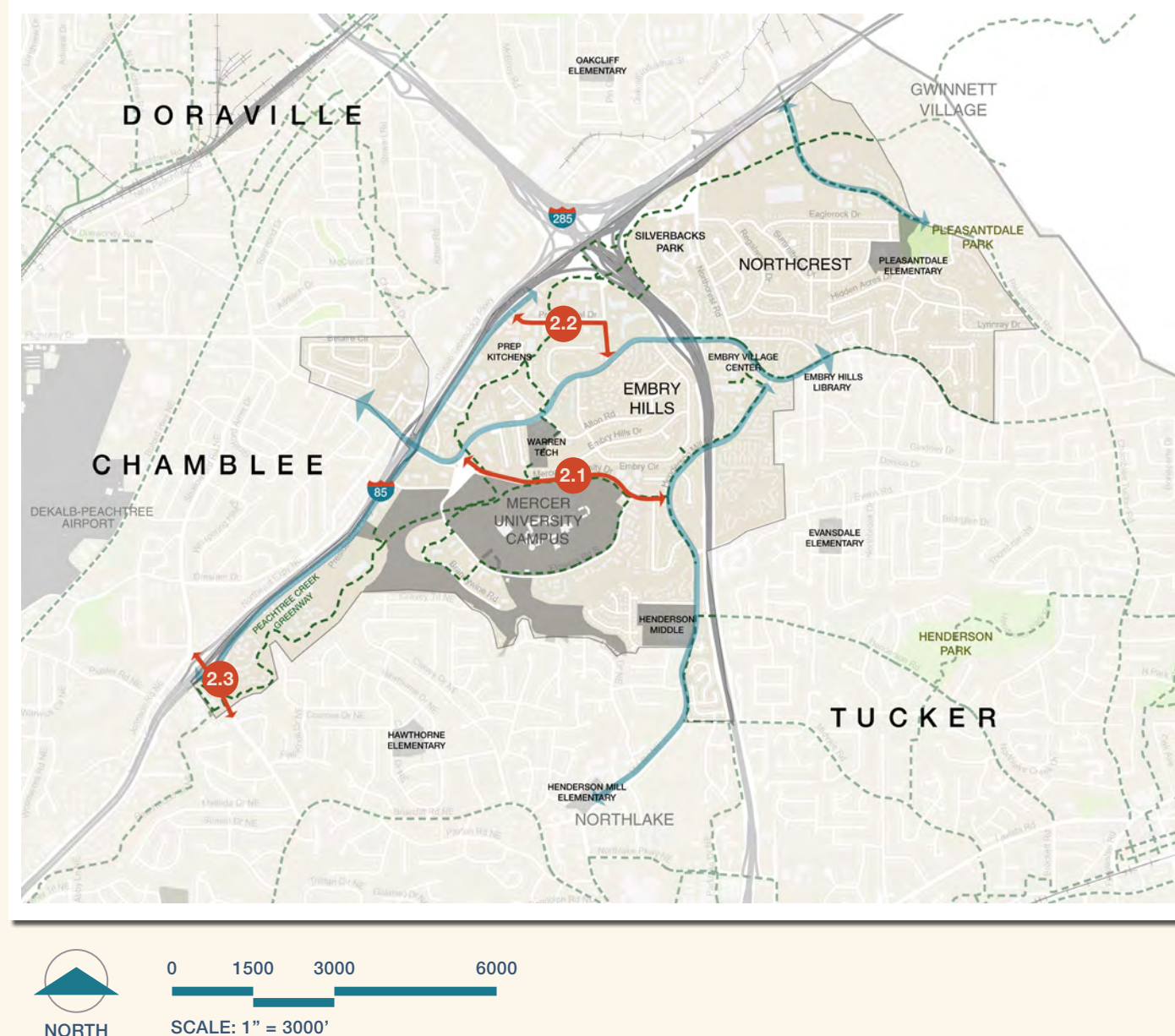
The pedestrian enhancement opportunities illustrate three primary roads that need pedestrian enhancements. Below is a list of elements that should be added to better connect the community.

- 2.1 MERCER UNIVERSITY DRIVE**
- 2.2 PRESIDENTIAL DRIVE**
- 2.3 SHALLOWFORD ROAD**

Pedestrian improvements and connectivity enhancements

A typical cross section for these roads should include:

- 6' min sidewalk, 10' recommended
- 6' min landscape buffer
- ADA ramps
- Enhanced crosswalks at all intersections
- Connections to planned trails
- Pedestrian scale wayfinding
- Site amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks near developments and planned trailheads



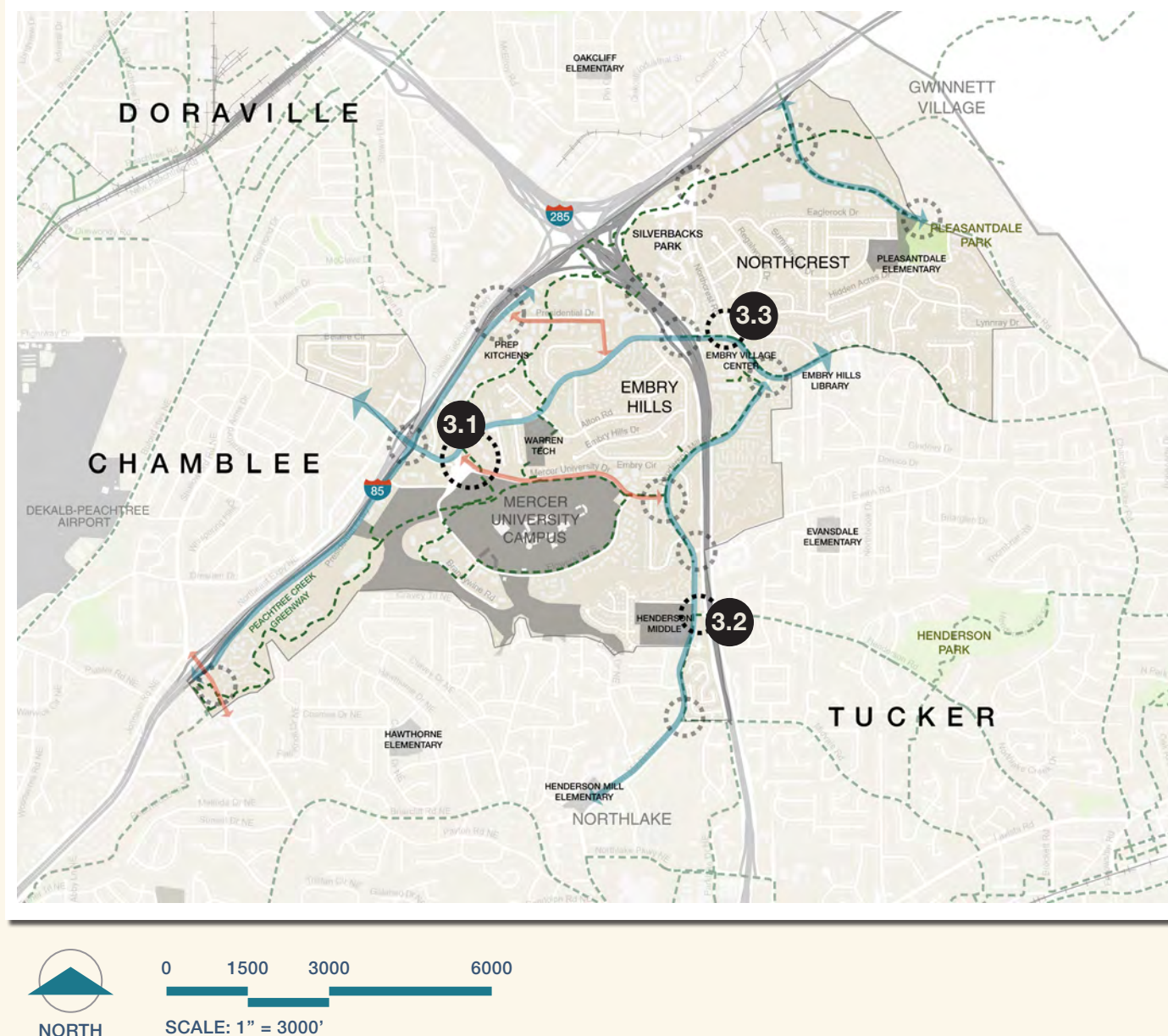
Key Intersection Improvements - Strategy 3

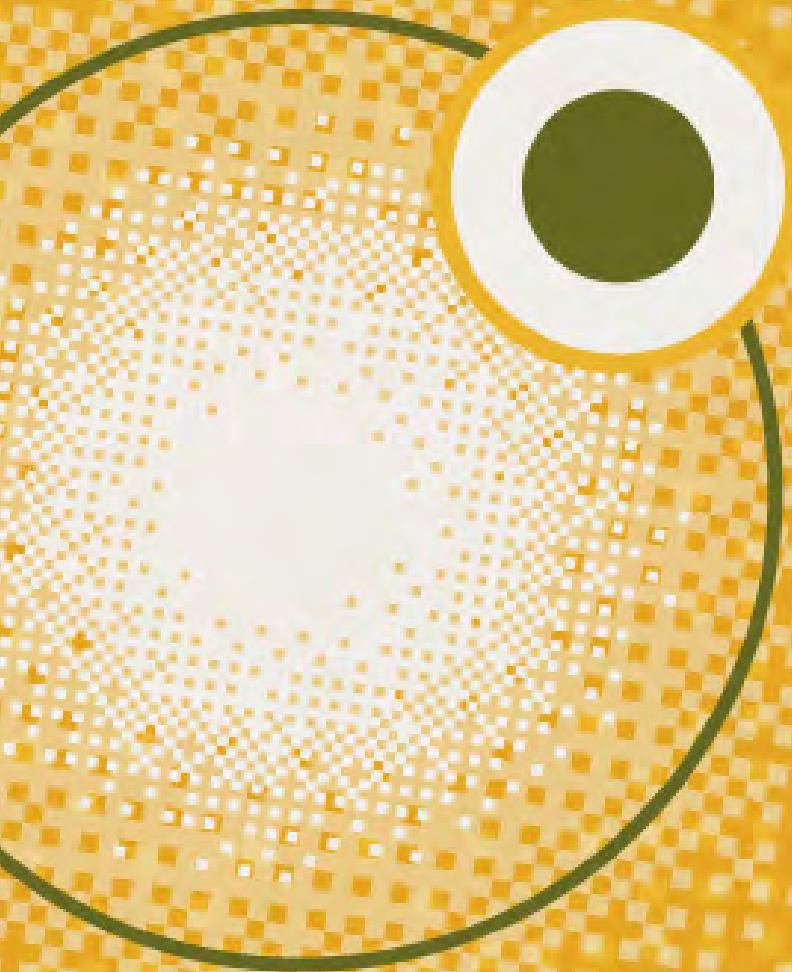
FIGURE 32 - INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

The plan identifies 14 intersections with high bicycle and pedestrian activity, inadequate existing infrastructure, or a history of frequent crashes. Among these, the top three are located off the highways and serve as key gateways to major destinations within the study area. These intersections were also identified as top priorities by the community through engagement efforts.

- 3.1 CHAMBLEE-TUCKER ROAD & MERCER UNIVERSITY DRIVE**
- 3.2 HENDERSON MILL ROAD & HENDERSON ROAD**
- 3.3 NORTHCREST ROAD & CHAMBLEE-TUCKER ROAD**

The Chamblee-Tucker Road & Mercer University Drive Intersection (3.1) was chosen as a catalyst site and detailed recommendation illustrate how improvements can be implemented throughout each area of the corridor. A detailed analysis of each intersection can be found in the appendix.





3.3

ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE

Recreation & Environment

Accessible Open Space Framework

The Accessible Open Space strategy focuses on expanding and connecting green space to better serve the community while responding to existing environmental constraints. By addressing gaps in neighborhood park access, leveraging underutilized areas within floodplains, and creating new trailheads, the strategy promotes equitable access to open space and preserves the natural character of the region.



ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE

**WHERE ARE EXISTING
RESOURCES AND
GAPS?**

Green Space Access

DeKalb county identifies neighborhood park gap in this location. Existing floodplain covers western border of our study area.

**WHAT ARE THE
ECOLOGICAL
CONSTRAINTS?**

Areas to Preserve

Existing open space is predominantly in floodplain and wetlands, limiting park development opportunities. Natural systems protect watershed and flooding for residents.

**WHERE ARE
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
INCREASING ACCESS?**

New Park Opportunities

Shared use agreements with schools and increase open space requirements for new developments.

**HOW DOES
PLACEMAKING FIT IN?**

Trailheads + Gateways

Integrate local identity through wayfinding, signage, and intersection art to draw attention to trailheads and help people navigate the area.

Areas to Preserve - Strategy 1

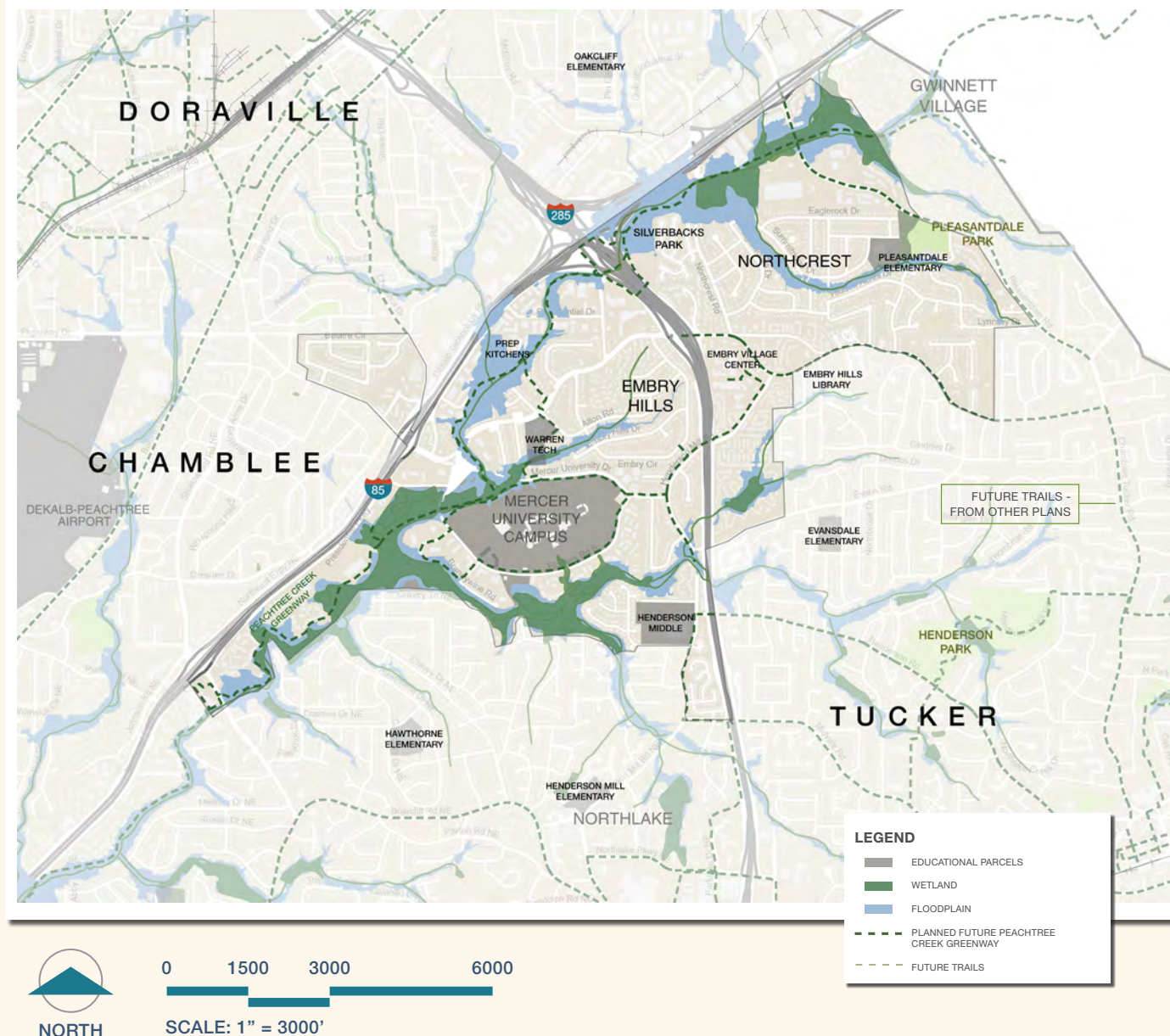
FLOODPLAIN

WETLANDS

The public revealed preserving nature a top priority for the study area. Preserving floodplains and wetlands helps reduce flooding, improve water quality, and protect homes and infrastructure. Recommendations to maintain the quality and function of the existing natural resources in the area include:

- Add larger conservation easements along the streams.
- Cluster development and allow more density in strategic areas so development doesn't sprawl into floodplain.
- Increase buffer requirements with more diversity of vegetation around wetlands and along streams to filter runoff, reduce erosion, and protect habitat. These buffers can also double as greenways or trails.
- Increase storm water management regulations by Requiring green infrastructure such as bioswales, rain gardens, permeable pavement, and detention areas.
- Implement sustainable erosion control practices.
- Increase tree protection requirements.

FIGURE 33 - PRESERVATION STRATEGY



New Park Opportunities - Strategy 2

The New Park Opportunities strategy focuses on expanding access to open space by introducing two new parks in underutilized areas and establishing shared use agreements with local schools. Together, these efforts address gaps in neighborhood park access while maximizing existing resources to provide more equitable, community-oriented recreational spaces.

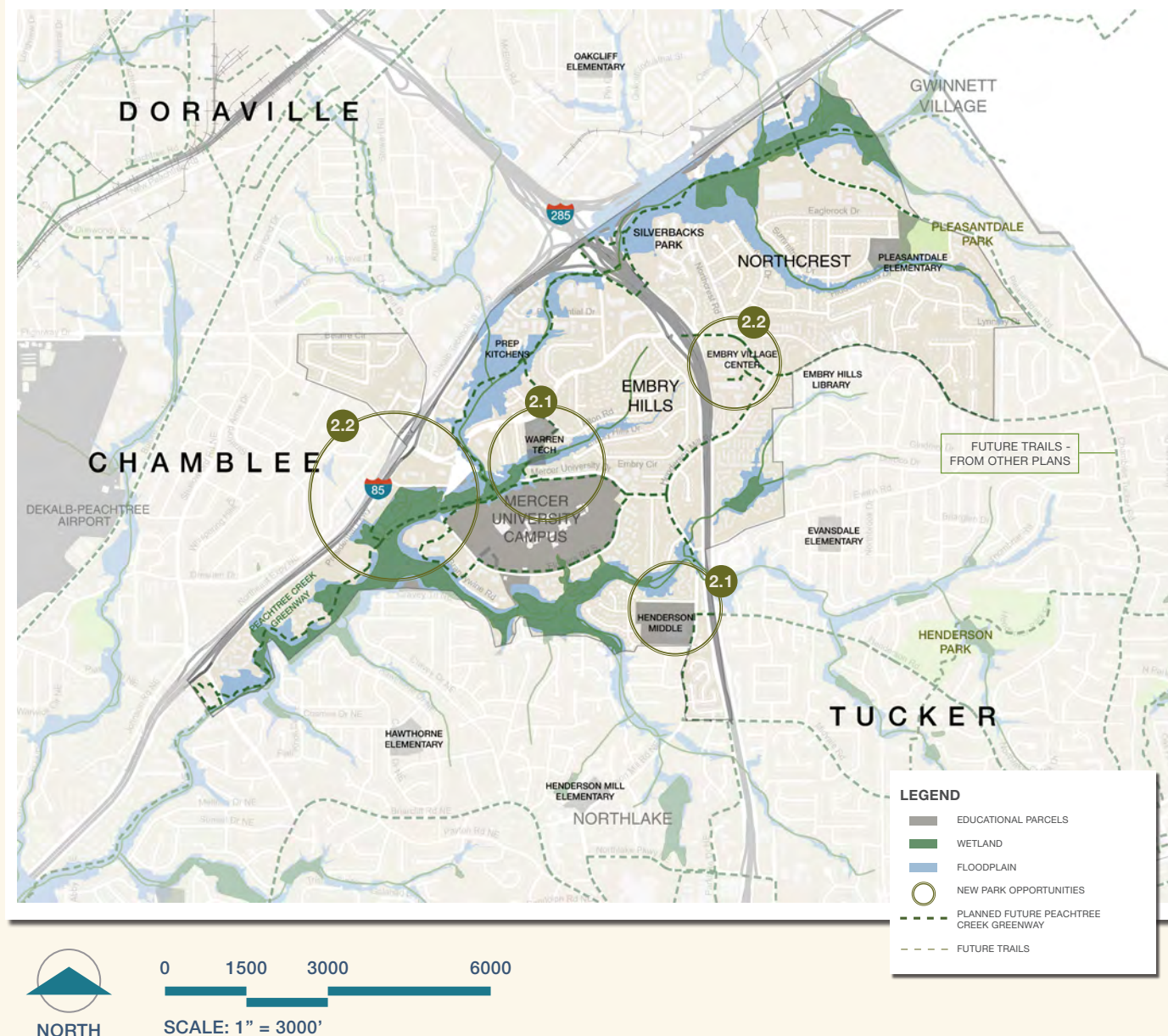
2.1 SHARED USE AGREEMENTS

Shared use agreements with schools are an opportunity to increase recreation opportunities within each neighborhood without the need for acquisition and parkland development. Once the school partners and sites are identified, the draft MOU agreement can be formed. Georgia Department of Public Health, Georgia Recreation and Park Association, ChangeLab Solutions, Trust for Public Land and more have resources to instigate this process.

2.2 ON NEW PARK LAND

As changes occur throughout the district, open space can be acquired through development restrictions, ROW acquisition, and floodplain development. The land development regulations or ordinances should be reviewed to determine where open space is required in the district. An overlay district can be developed for the regional center to increase requirements if the current zoning code is not sufficient.

FIGURE 35 - NEW PARK STRATEGY



Trailhead Gateways - Strategy 3

The Trailhead Gateway strategy focuses on establishing trailheads at major intersections to create visible, accessible entry points into the corridor's open space network. By leveraging key nodes along the street network, these trailheads will open access for the community to nature while serving as gateways that support wayfinding, placemaking, and access to future trails. Each trailhead should be designed to be ADA accessible.

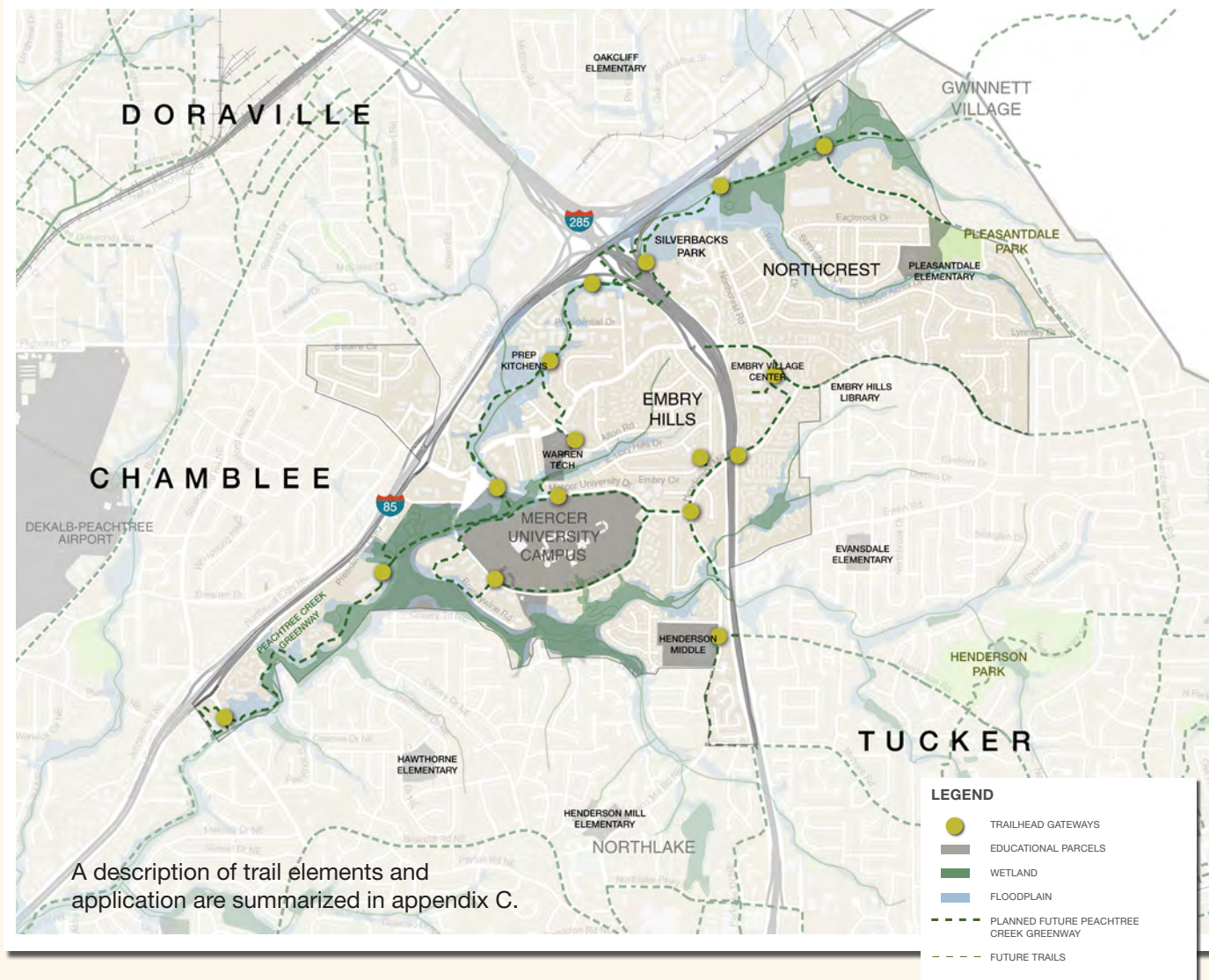
TRAILHEAD / GATEWAY OPPORTUNITIES

At minimum, trailheads for our district should include:

- Signage / wayfinding
- Enhanced paving
- Seating
- Lighting
- Public art
- Trash receptacles
- Dog waster stations
- Enhanced landscape
- Shade

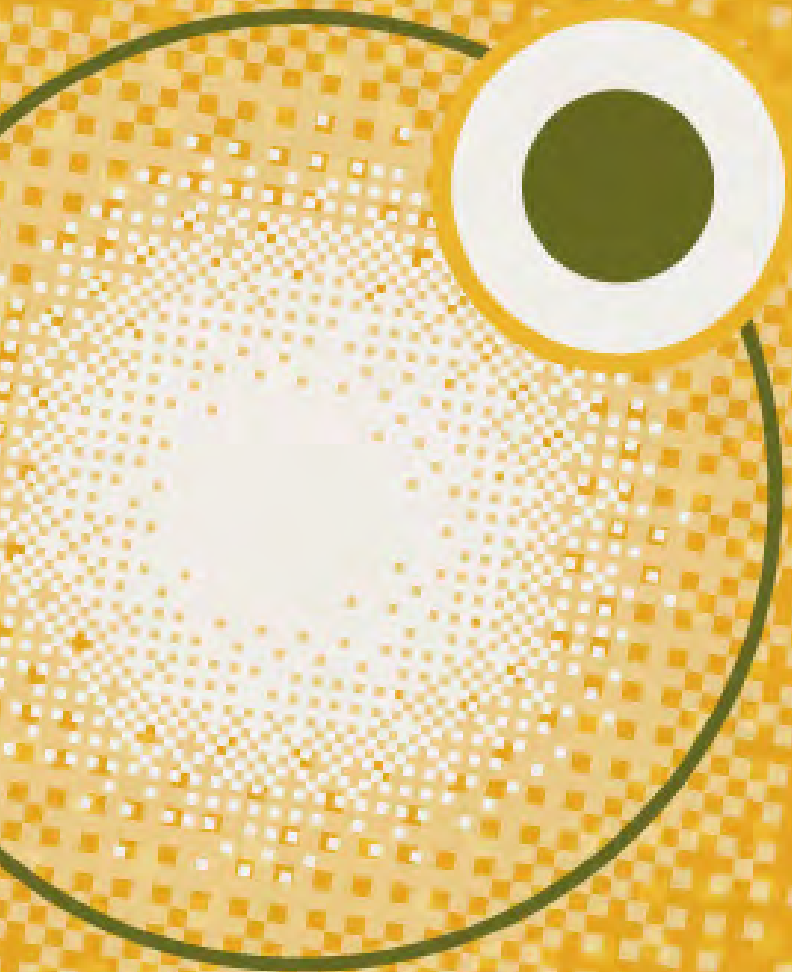
Additional items that can be included if space allows are: Parking lots, restrooms, safety beacons, water fountains, and play elements. These items require more land and infrastructure investment and would not be feasible for every proposed location. These elements should be included closer to the Peachtree Creek Greenway Master Plan and on each side of I-285.

FIGURE 36 - TRAILHEAD GATEWAY STRATEGY



0 1500 3000 6000

SCALE: 1" = 3000'

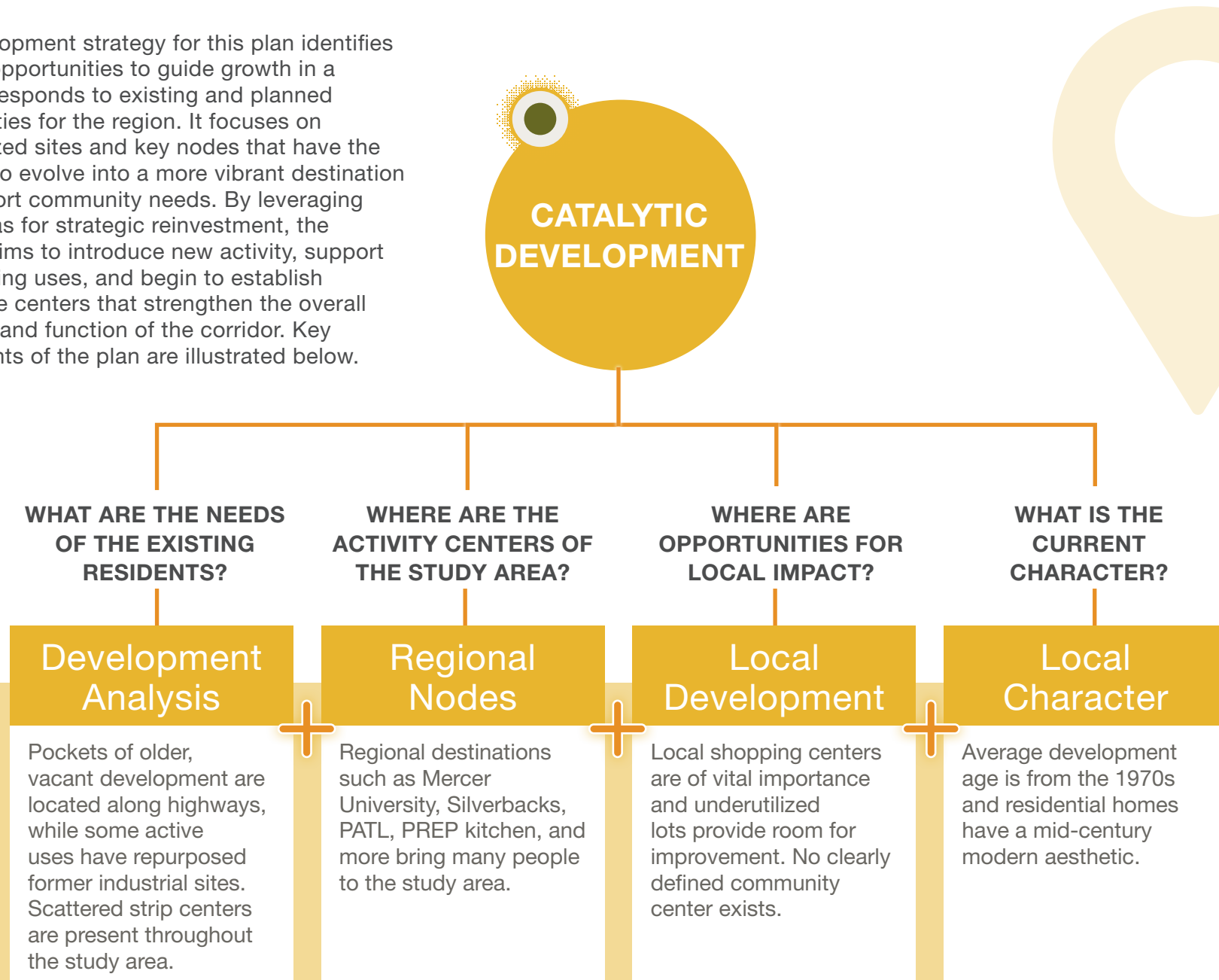


3.4 CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT

Commerce, Connection, and
Opportunity

Catalyst Development Framework

The Development strategy for this plan identifies targeted opportunities to guide growth in a way that responds to existing and planned opportunities for the region. It focuses on underutilized sites and key nodes that have the potential to evolve into a more vibrant destination that support community needs. By leveraging these areas for strategic reinvestment, the strategy aims to introduce new activity, support local-serving uses, and begin to establish identifiable centers that strengthen the overall character and function of the corridor. Key components of the plan are illustrated below.



Regional Development Opportunities - Strategy 1

Strategies for regional development build off of the existing and planned nodes in the study area. The area is already a destination and planned regional hub. By targeting locations near highways with minimal site constraints and areas that are aligned with community interest the area can transform into a place that works for all.

1.1 I-285 & I-85 - PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY NODE

This node is highly visible from the highway. Recommendations to build on the DeKalb County Future Land Use (FLU) Plan include adding density, leveraging the success of existing sports and fitness uses to attract active lifestyle businesses, and establishing a strong district identity through highway-scaled gateways and coordinated wayfinding to position the area as a destination.

1.2 SHALLOWFORD ROAD NODE

The Shallowford Road Node can build off the existing momentum around this intersection. There is an opportunity to add needed services to all the residents in the area.

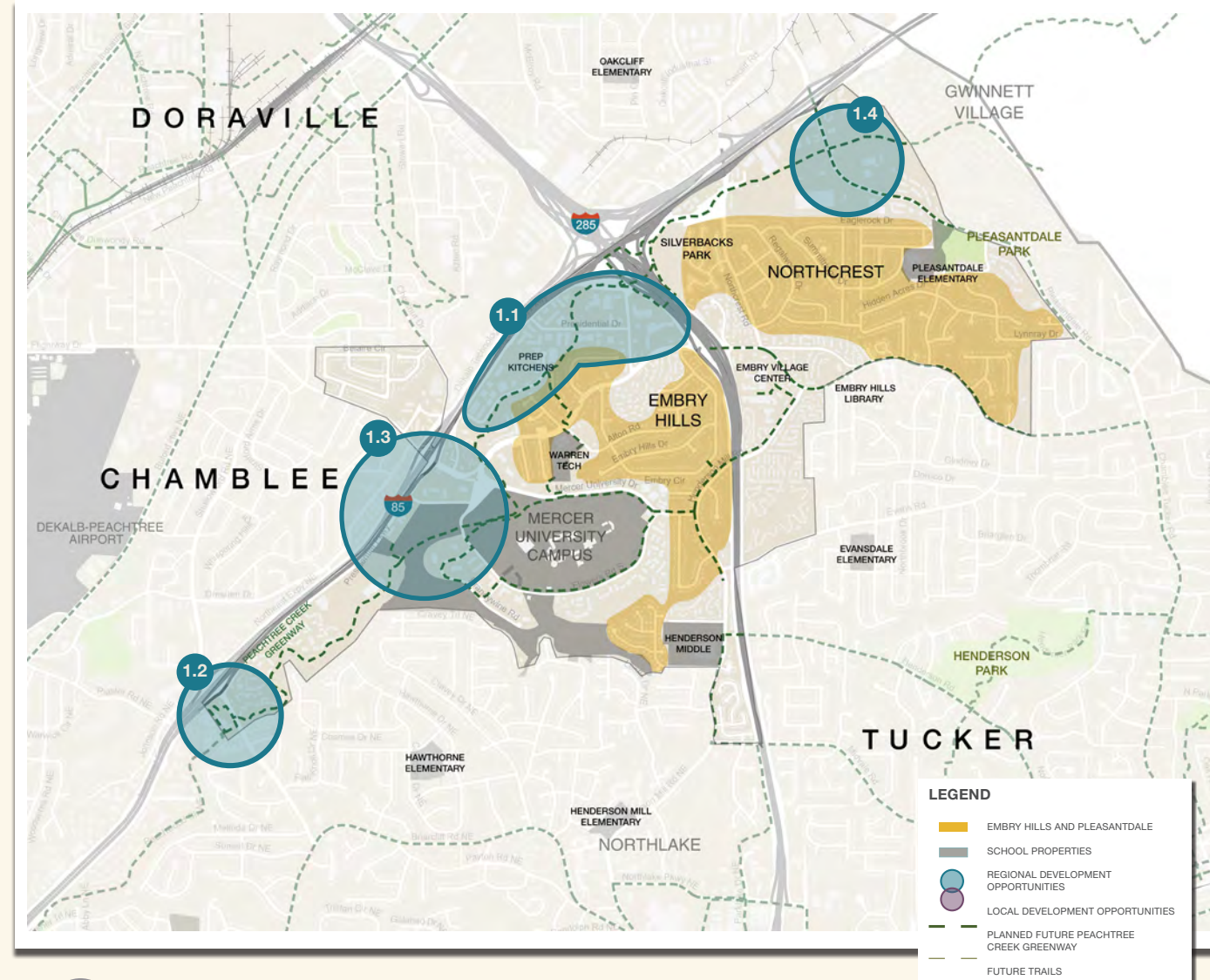
1.3 MERCER ENTRY NODE

The exit off of I-85 acts as a gateway to Mercer University. There are major large parcels covered in surface parking lots along the floodplain that offer infill opportunities for more dense mixed use housing.

1.4 PLEASANTDALE INDUSTRIAL NODE

This is an underutilized light industrial area with large parcels and easy access from major roads. More vacancies are concentrated in this area with limited activity which gives the opportunity for revitalization.

FIGURE 37 - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Local Development Opportunities - Strategy 2

Local opportunities identified through community engagement highlighted nodes that need support but offer access to essential, neighborhood-serving resources and amenities. These areas emerged as important community anchors, with clear opportunities for targeted improvements to enhance accessibility, strengthen existing assets, and better serve surrounding neighborhoods.

2.1 EMBRY VILLAGE

This node is highly visible from the highway. Located just off I-85, is surrounded by higher-density housing and recently renovated buildings, positioning it for continued growth. With over 60% of the site currently dedicated to vehicular use, there is a strong opportunity to introduce infill development that better utilizes the land, supports additional neighborhood-serving uses, and creates a more balanced, active environment.

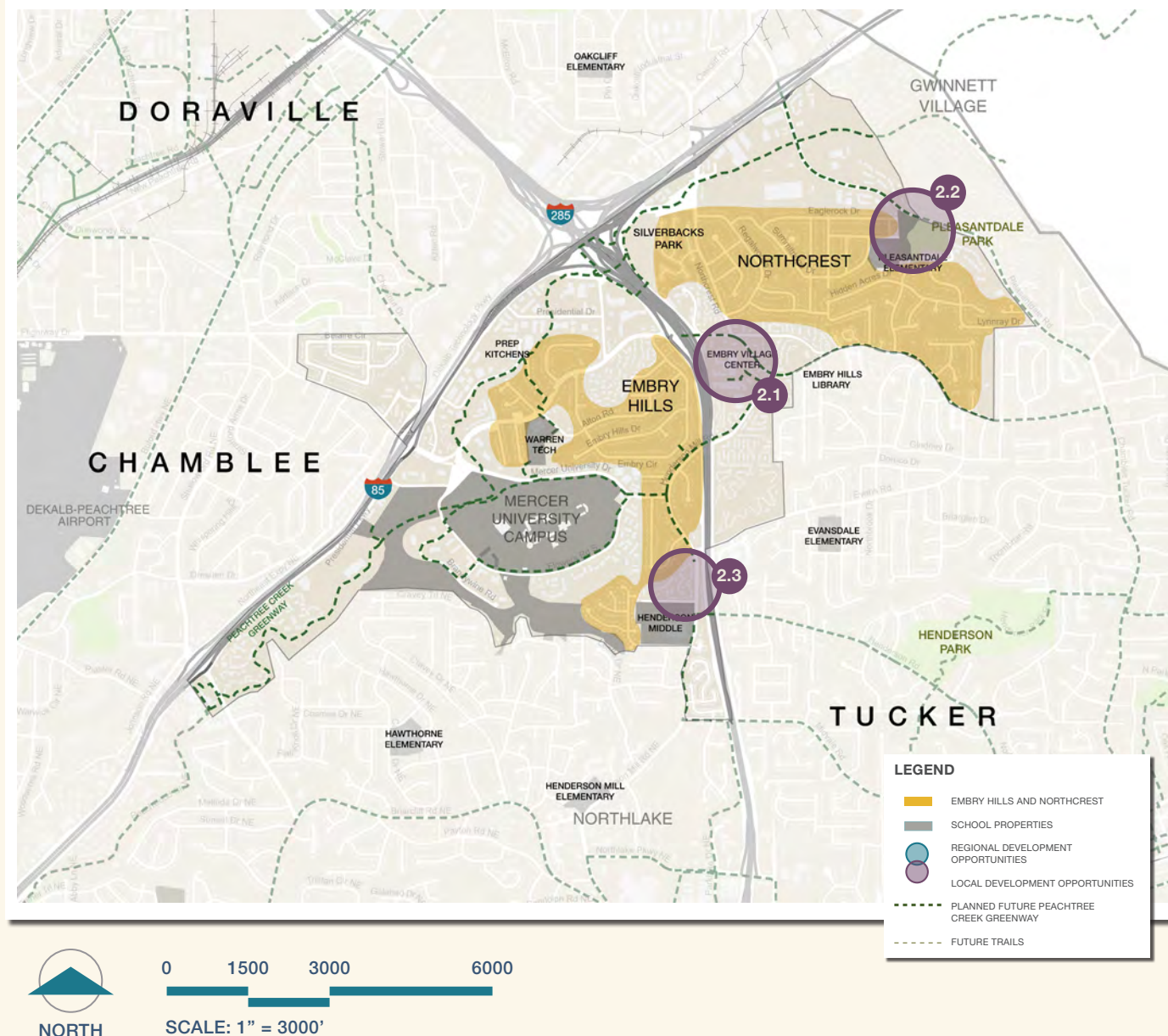
2.2 PLEASANTDALE PARK

Connected to Pleasantdale Elementary and neighborhood, with park enhancements underway. Small older industrial sites are an opportunity for infill neighborhood services.

2.3 HENDERSON MIDDLE INTERSECTION

Along key connective intersections this intersection links Embry Hills, local schools, and the Northlake community improvement district (CID). This small commercial center located just off the highway is characterized by limited connectivity and a pattern of small, narrow parcels. Strategic opportunities exist to improve connections to surrounding residential areas and introduce targeted infill development.

FIGURE 38 - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Neighborhood Priorities - Strategy 3

FIGURE 43 - NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITY STRATEGY

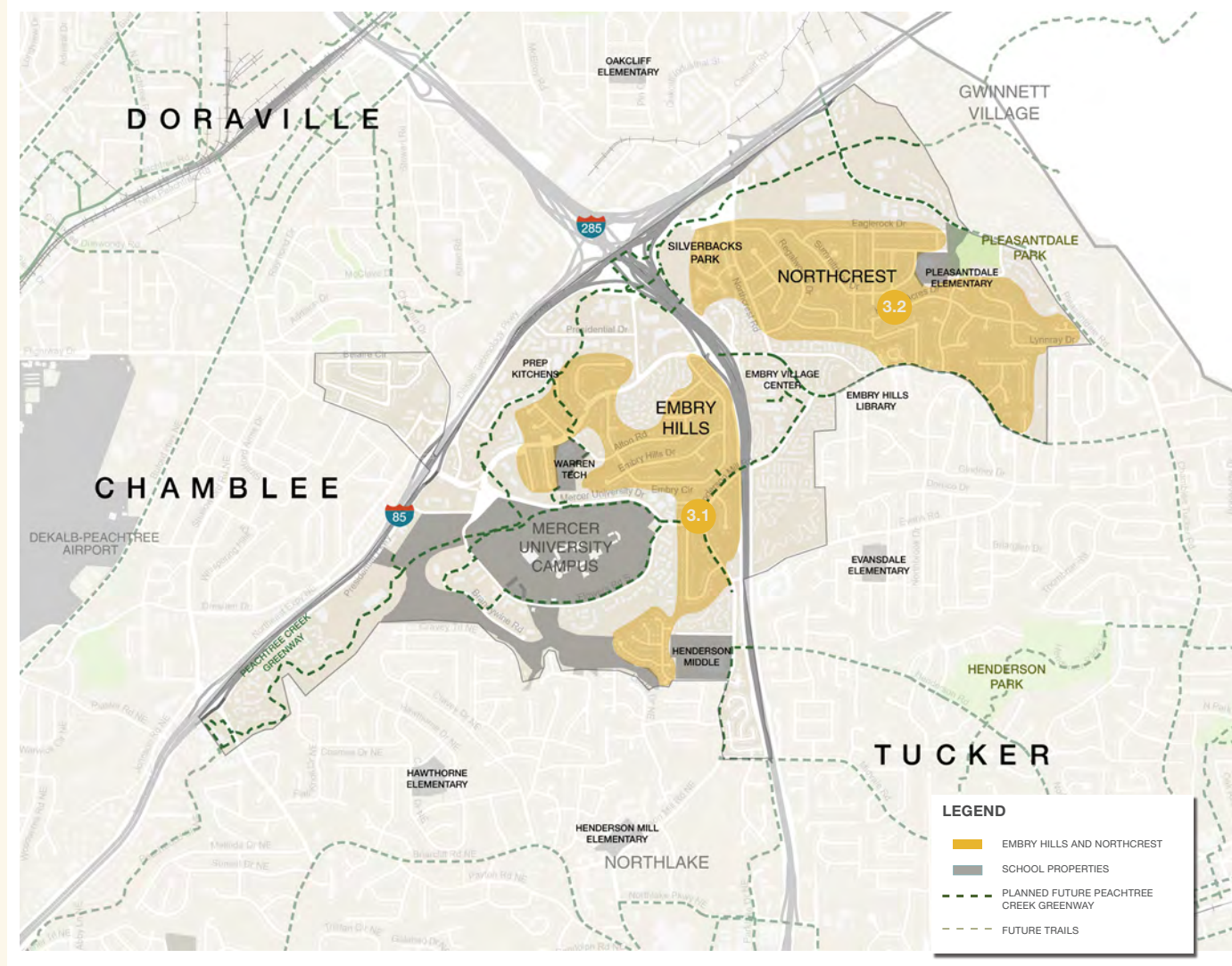
The existing neighborhoods of Embry Hills and Northcrest are experiencing increasing development pressure and require policies to help protect their character and stability. As nearby growth and reinvestment continue, these communities face challenges related to housing affordability, compatibility of new development, and the potential displacement of long-term residents. Targeted policies are needed to help guide change in a way that protects these neighborhoods while still accommodating thoughtful growth. These policies focus on preserving housing stability, reinforcing neighborhood identity, and ensuring that new development is compatible with the surrounding context, allowing these areas to remain cohesive, resilient, and connected to the broader corridor.

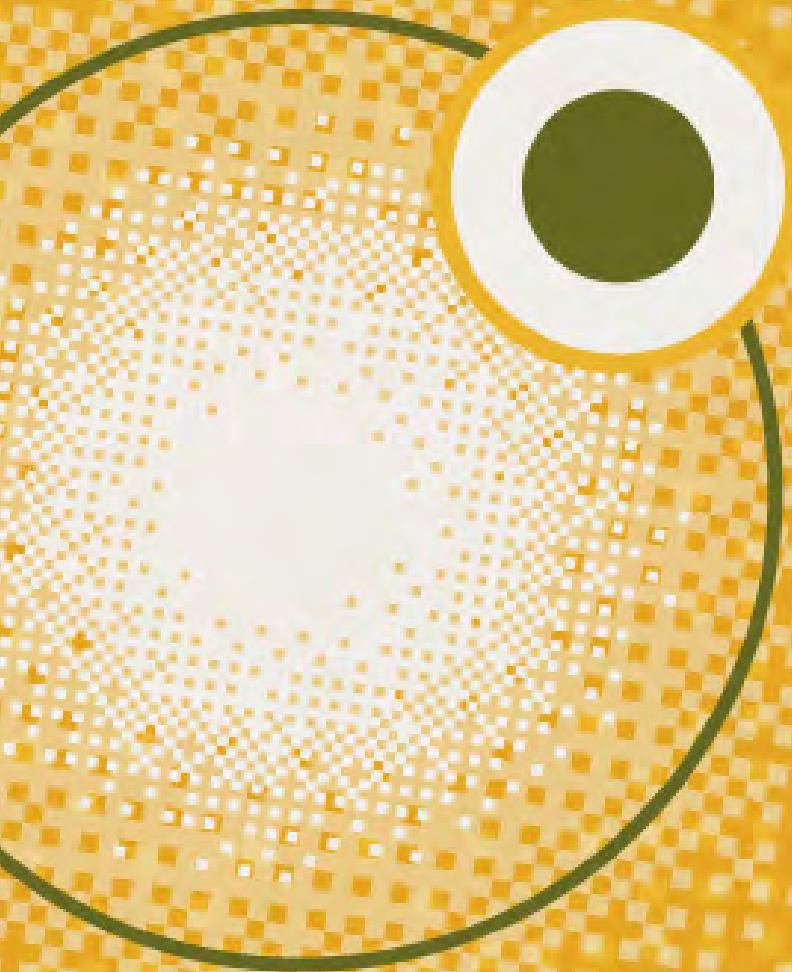
3.1 Embry Hills

3.2 Northcrest

The main focus for these neighborhoods include:

-  Pedestrian connections to amenities, services, and local businesses
-  Placemaking and neighborhood activity to celebrate the unique character and history of each area
-  Preventing displacement and housing pressure





3.5 LINKING NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGH HOUSING

Connecting Community

Bridging People, Places, and Opportunity

Because this area is currently defined by a diverse mix of housing types, policies that strengthen and maintain existing neighborhoods are critical to this plan. Housing plays a central role in how neighborhoods connect. The location, design, and preservation of housing will influence access to services, support community stability, and shape how the corridor evolves.

CURRENT HOUSING CONDITIONS



The study area includes Embry Hills, Northcrest, and surrounding residential areas connected by Presidential Parkway and the I-85 interchange. These communities form a stable residential district with strong neighborhood identity and a mix of housing types supported by nearby commercial services.



Embry Hills and Northcrest remain largely stable. In contrast, the rest of the study area reflects a different condition defined by aging commercial centers, multifamily housing, motel properties, and highway adjacent sites that are increasingly positioned for reinvestment.



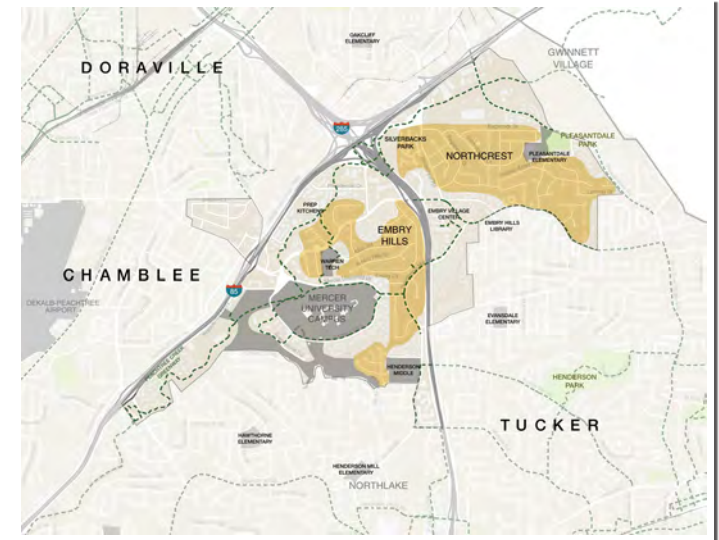
Several apartment communities along the corridor provide naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) that supports working families, immigrant households, and Spanish-speaking residents.



Housing instability and visible homelessness are present in targeted areas, particularly near commercial nodes, natural areas and floodplains, and highway adjacent properties.



As reinvestment occurs, the primary challenge is to ensure that new development strengthens the corridor without destabilizing surrounding neighborhoods or displacing vulnerable residents.



Housing Strategy

The housing recommendations for this plan are organized into three primary categories: housing preservation, infill opportunities, and future housing growth. The majority of new growth is directed along major corridors and highways to help accommodate demand while minimizing impacts on existing neighborhoods. Infill development is targeted in areas with existing density and underutilized land, supporting context-sensitive expansion. Preservation efforts are focused within established neighborhoods to maintain their character and stability. Together, these strategies create a cohesive framework that prioritizes housing needs while guiding balanced and sustainable growth.

HOUSING TO PRESERVE

Embry Hills and Northcrest represent stable neighborhoods composed primarily of single family homes with long term residents. In addition, several multifamily communities along the corridor provide naturally occurring affordable housing. These areas form the foundation of housing stability and should be protected from displacement and incompatible redevelopment.

FUTURE HOUSING GROWTH

Areas along Presidential Parkway and key access points include aging commercial centers, old industrial buildings, and underutilized parcels that are positioned for reinvestment. These locations can accommodate higher density and mixed use development where infrastructure and access already exist.

INFILL OPPORTUNITIES

Targeted sites located between neighborhoods and along the corridor provide opportunities for smaller scale residential or mixed use development. These sites can help fill gaps in the urban fabric and improve connections between neighborhoods and the corridor.

Housing instability and visible homelessness are also present in targeted areas of the corridor, particularly near commercial nodes, natural areas, and highway adjacent properties. These conditions reflect broader regional affordability challenges and require both targeted and long term responses.

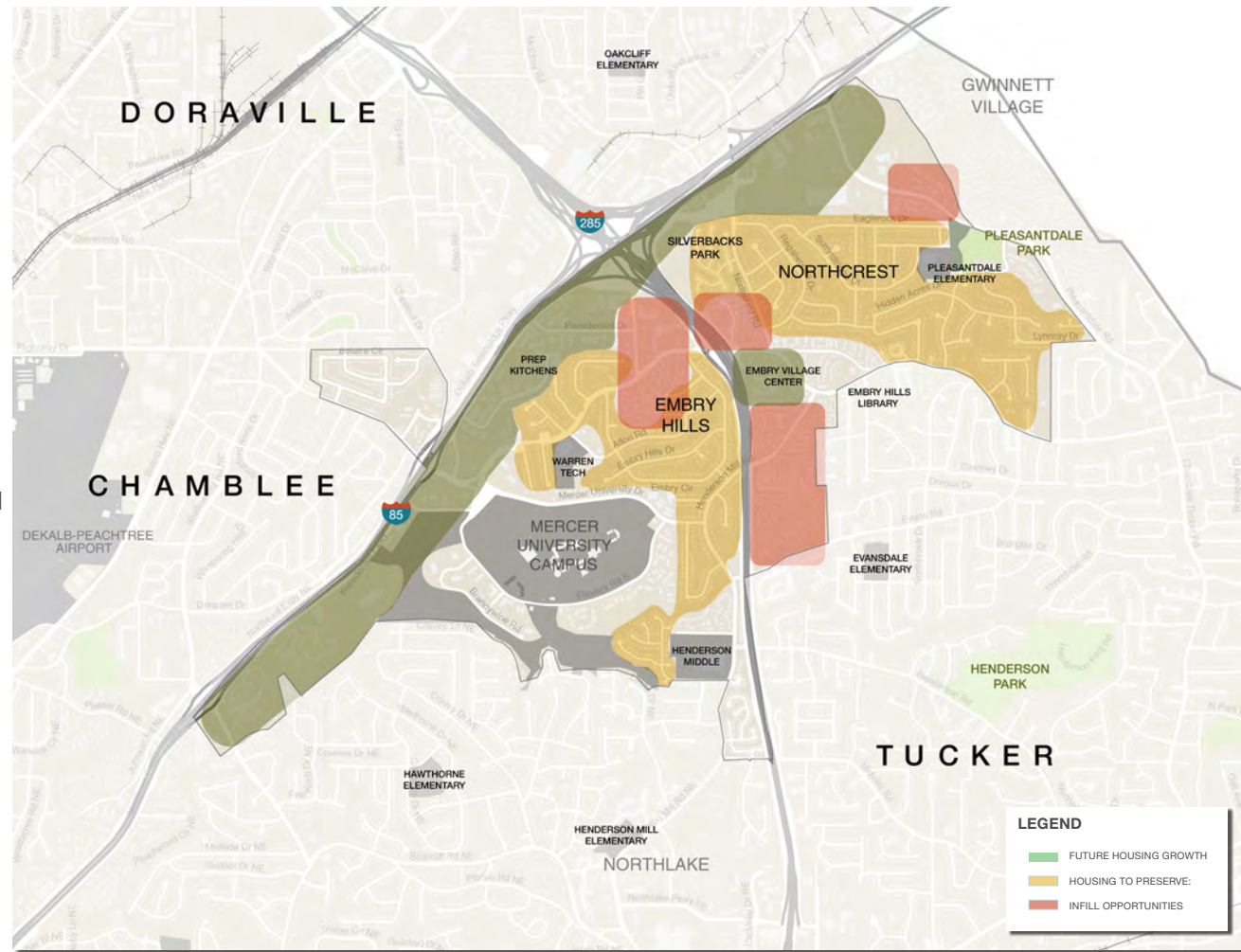


FIGURE 44 - HOUSING STRATEGY

Housing as a Connector

Housing should be used intentionally to strengthen connections between neighborhoods and the corridor. Existing multifamily communities already link residents to jobs, services, and transit. Preserving these communities maintains both affordability and access.

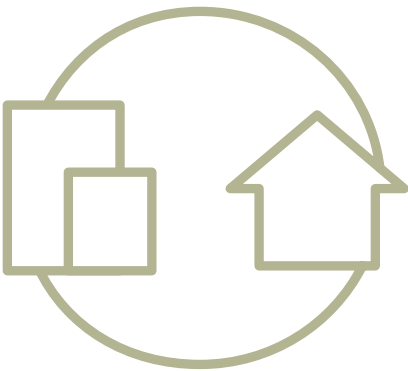
Future housing should reinforce this network by focusing development along the corridor and improving connections to surrounding neighborhoods. Priorities include:

- Activating underutilized sites
- Improving walkability and access between housing, services, and transit
- Aligning new development with existing community assets

Well-designed housing integrated with streets, public space, and amenities can strengthen both physical and social connections across the corridor.



Zoning and Overlay Strategies



Zoning and land use policies will guide how housing evolves along Presidential Parkway. These tools should focus growth in appropriate locations while protecting neighborhood stability.

Design guidelines can support mixed use and workforce housing while ensuring compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods. This includes affordable housing incentives, density bonuses, and design standards that manage scale and transition. Regional Center development presents no cap on density, offering flexibility for future development.

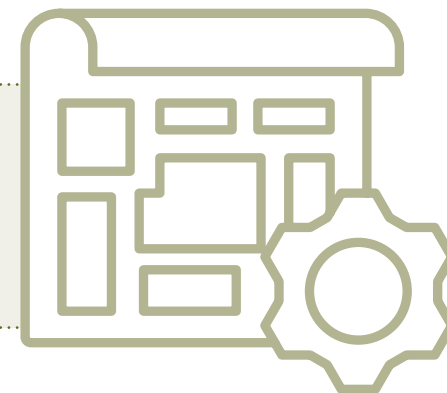
Neighborhood stabilization areas should be used to protect established communities such as Embry Hills and Northcrest. This includes limiting large scale redevelopment and supporting context sensitive infill.

Adaptive reuse provides an opportunity to convert aging commercial properties and motel sites into housing. This approach can be supported through streamlined permitting, reduced parking requirements, and flexible zoning standards.

A Design-Led Approach to Housing Instability

Housing instability and homelessness are present in specific locations along the corridor, reflecting broader regional affordability challenges while manifesting locally. Within the study area, there is an opportunity to test small-scale, community-integrated solutions that are both visible and design-driven. A potential pilot approach could include:

- A small-scale shelter village on underutilized or industrial land near the corridor
- Modular units organized around shared open space
- Integration of public art, color, and landscape to create identity and dignity
- Partnerships with local organizations for services and programming



Rather than isolating these spaces, the goal is to create environments that are safe and welcoming, connected to services and transit, and designed as part of the broader community fabric. This approach positions the study area as a place where innovative, human-centered strategies can be tested and scaled.

Designing for Connection, Identity, and Belonging

Linking neighborhoods is not only about infrastructure, it is about creating a sense of belonging. Public art, signage, and placemaking elements can:

- Mark gateways between neighborhoods
- Reflect the cultural diversity of the community
- Activate underutilized spaces
- Create memorable, people-centered environments

Together, these strategies help transform the study area from a corridor of movement into a corridor of connection.

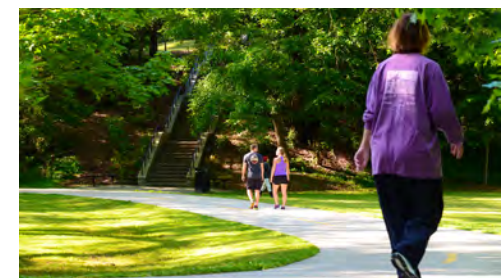
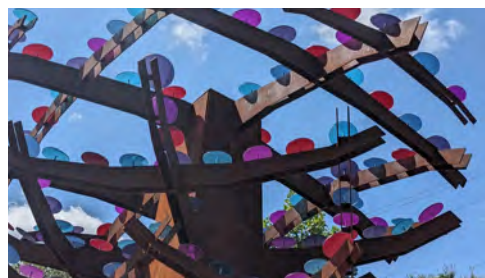
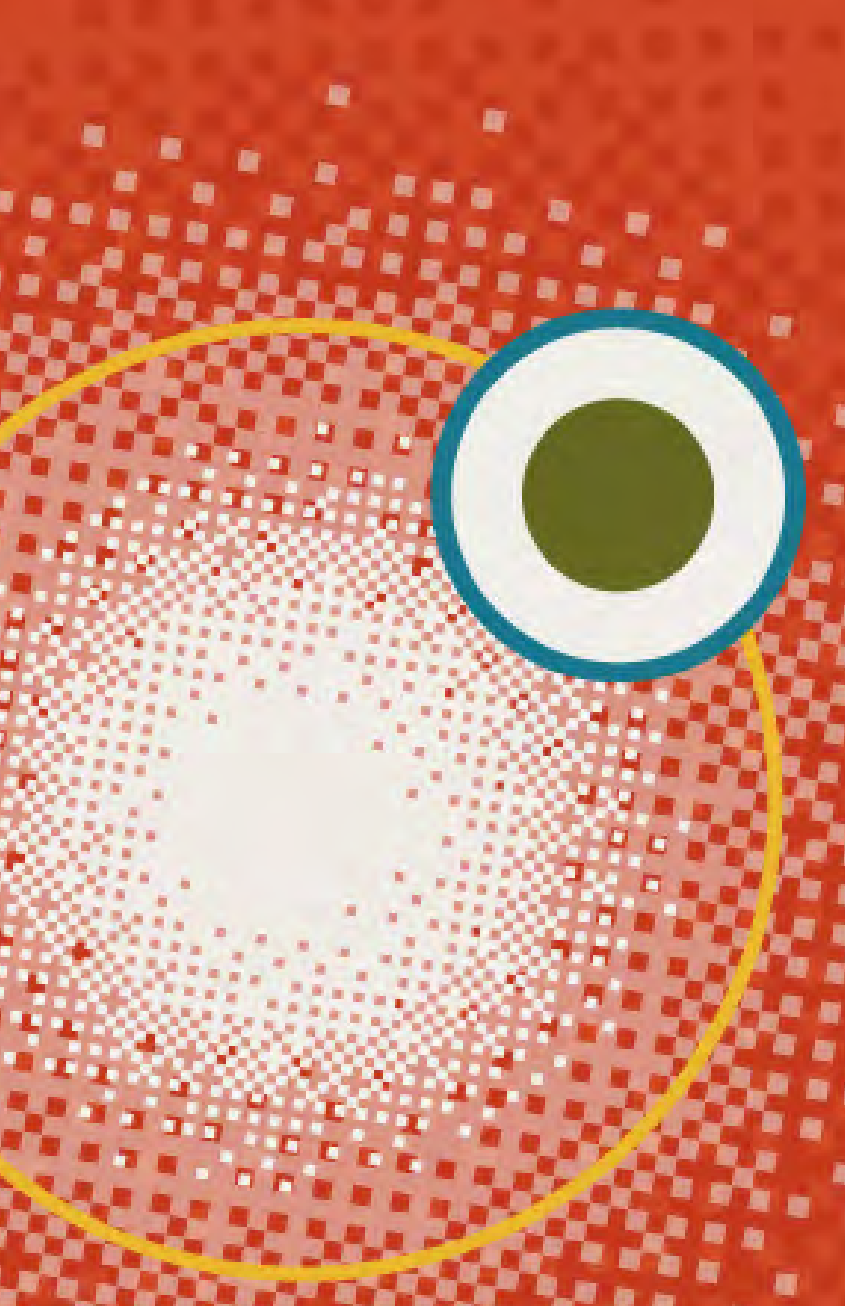


FIGURE 45 - PRECEDENT CONNECTION AND IDENTITY IMAGERY

A decorative pattern of small squares in various shades of orange and red, arranged in a grid-like fashion, occupies the left side of the slide.

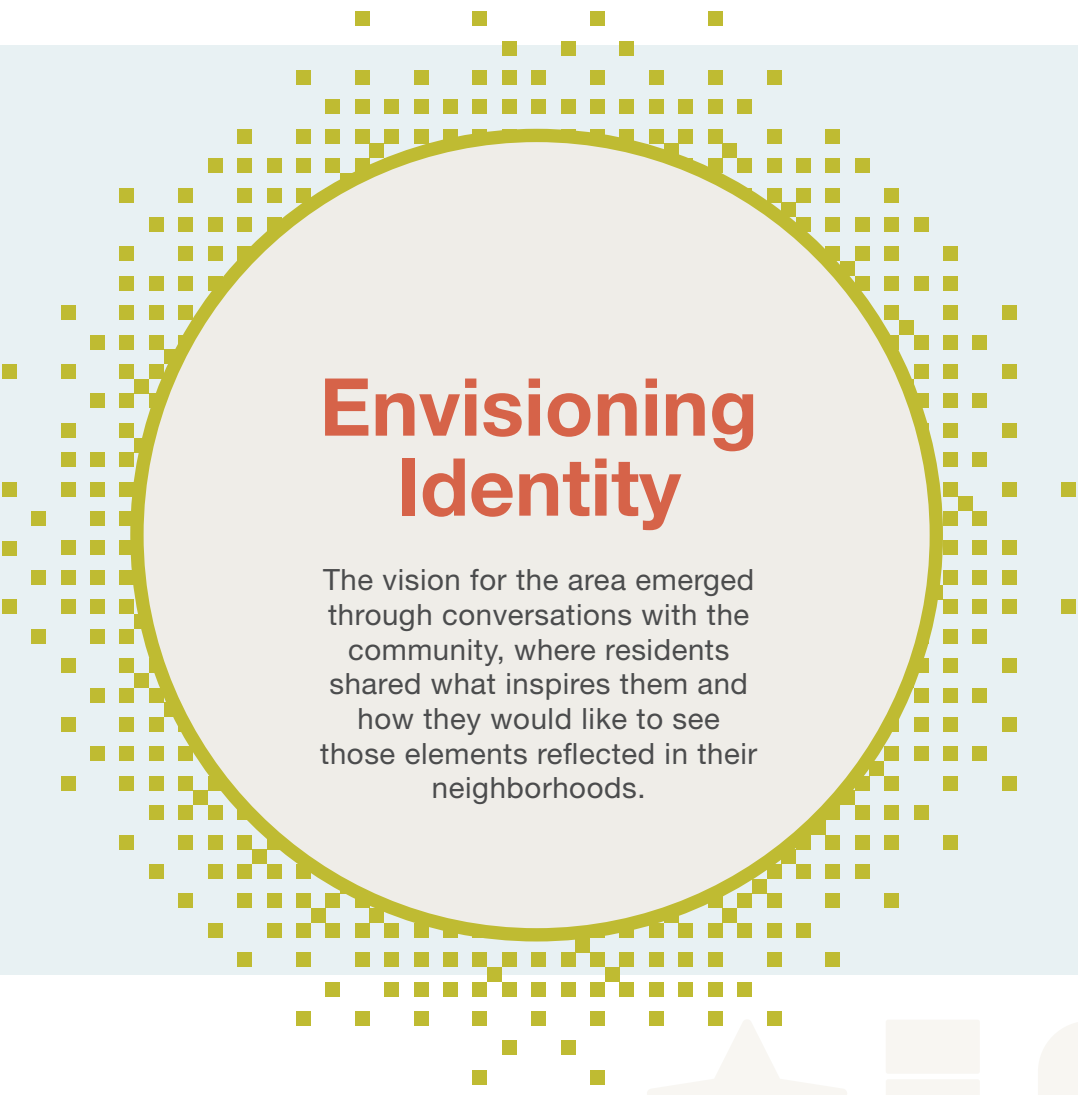
CHAPTER 4

The District Experience Framework



4.1

ILLUSTRATING ART, IDENTITY, AND PLACE



Envisioning Identity

The vision for the area emerged through conversations with the community, where residents shared what inspires them and how they would like to see those elements reflected in their neighborhoods.

Building on this visioning process and initial engagement, additional insights were gathered through public art assessments, pop-up events, and design workshops. During these workshops, community members explored questions of identity and contributed to the creation of the catalyst mural. Key questions included:

What makes the place unique?

What role does this area play in the region?

What do we want our future to look like?

What are the greatest assets?

We developed a bright and vibrant palette that can be utilized for features throughout the district that reflect the identity of the place.



Branding Framework

Signage specific to Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway and Surrounding Communities will emphasize the identity of the area and help define the boundaries of the district. Local street signage can be designed with input from the community for a design that reflects the identity and vision of the neighborhood.

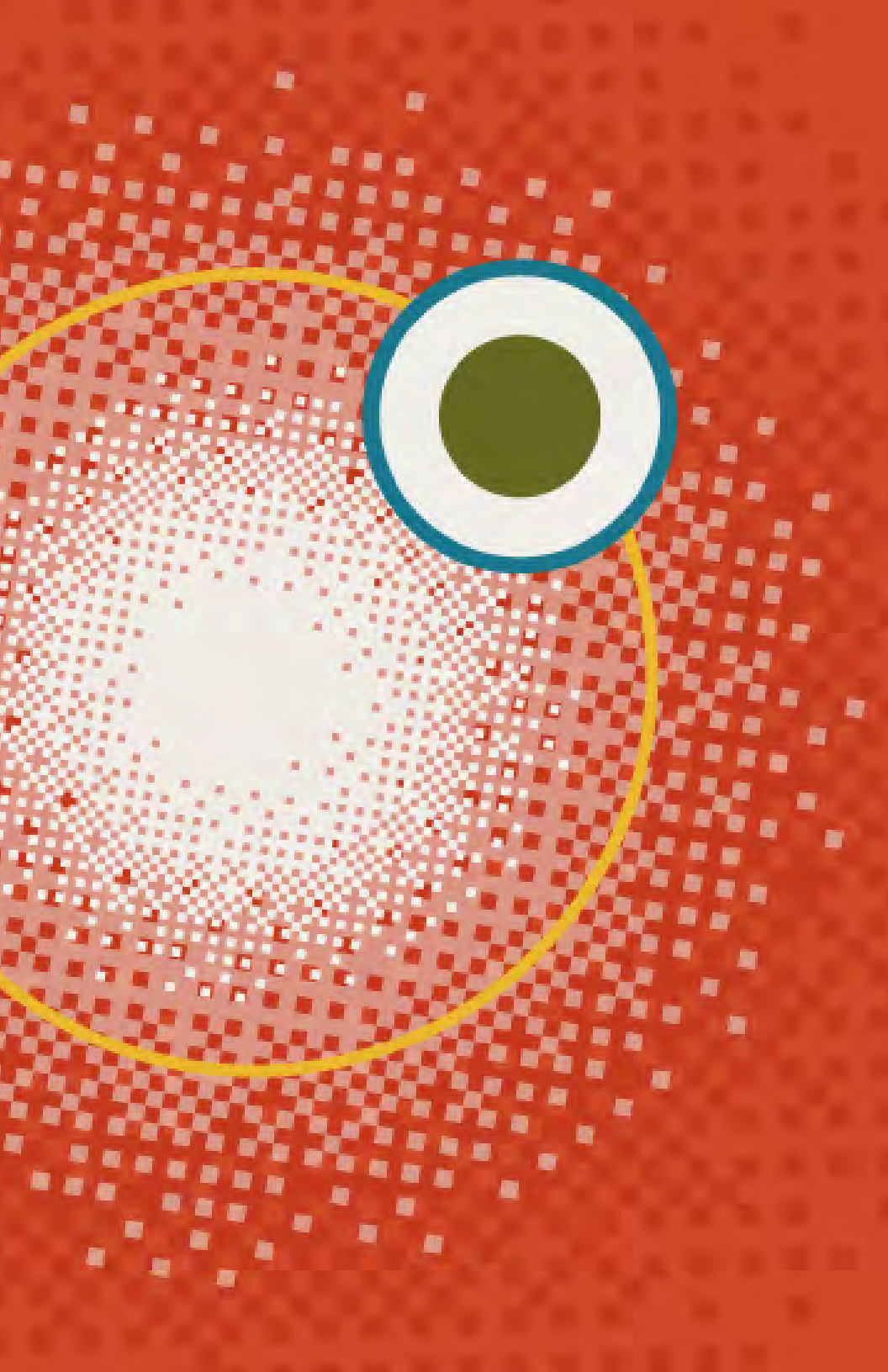
Vehicular wayfinding will guide visitors to key destinations while introducing them to the corridor's identity. Larger-scale elements, clear typography, and high-contrast colors will ensure visibility at higher speeds, creating both clarity and a recognizable visual language.

Bilingual signage will support the area's diverse and multilingual population, making navigation more inclusive and accessible. Universal icons and pedestrian-scaled wayfinding elements will further enhance connectivity, helping residents and visitors easily access local businesses, amenities, and community spaces.

Establishing a **consistent signage standard** across the corridor will improve clarity, strengthen identity, and enhance the overall visual quality of the area. As development continues, this cohesive approach will help create a vibrant, welcoming environment that reflects the community's character and supports a strong sense of place.



FIGURE 46 - BRANDING CONCEPTS. DESIGNS ARE CONCEPTUAL AND FOR RENDERING PURPOSES ONLY - DIAGRAMS DO NOT SHOW A FINAL DESIGN SIGNAGE PLAN.



4.2

PUBLIC ART FRAMEWORK

Where Art and Community Meet

Public Art Strategies

Integrate Public Art with Functional Community Goals

- Align public art with safety, wayfinding, and connectivity. Integrate into pedestrian safety improvements, wayfinding systems, and connectivity enhancements so that placemaking supports both aesthetic and functional community needs.
 - ♦ This includes: Traffic-calming artwork, artistic crosswalks, and creative seating near transit stops
- Incorporate identity and gateway elements. Use signature installations, signage, and gateway markers to reinforce neighborhood identity and create recognizable landmarks that reflect Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway, and surrounding communities history and community character.
- Embed public art in capital and infrastructure projects. Establish internal processes to ensure that public art is considered alongside all new public projects.
 - ♦ This includes: Streetscape improvements, parks, transit areas, and commercial corridors
- Activate underutilized spaces through design. Integrate art into parking lots, intersections, and other overlooked areas to improve visibility, safety, and create welcoming gathering spaces.
- Furthermore, any naming of places, corridors, or neighborhoods — whether through signage, murals, or gateway markers — should emerge from and be validated by the communities those names are meant to represent, ensuring that public art becomes a source of shared pride rather than contention.

Foster Ongoing Engagement with Artists and Creatives

- Create participatory opportunities. Incorporate community paint days, youth engagement initiatives, and artist-led workshops so residents play an active role in shaping public art and feel ownership of the outcomes.
 - ♦ This includes: Partnering with established community organizations that engage local groups. This supports participation, partnership, and potential crossover benefits, such as partnering to bring multiple resources to communities.

- Leverage artists already in the community. Identify and collaborate with local creatives and grassroots artist networks.
- Maintain sustained, ongoing open communication channels.
 - ♦ This includes: Periodic forums, focus groups, or meetings for artists to convene and brainstorm. Provide an accessible space on the County website for submissions, and share updates on funding and other timelines to keep artists informed and involved over time.

Establish Clear Pathways for Artist Involvement

- Develop transparent engagement processes. Share clear guidelines for how artists can participate, propose and submit ideas, and respond to opportunities beyond the traditional RFPs.
- Enable equitable compensation and recognition. Prioritize building consistent compensation structures and visibility for artists to support sustainable, symbiotic, long-term involvement.
- Create structures that invite collaboration. Build genuine relationships with creatives, participate in artist collective meetings.

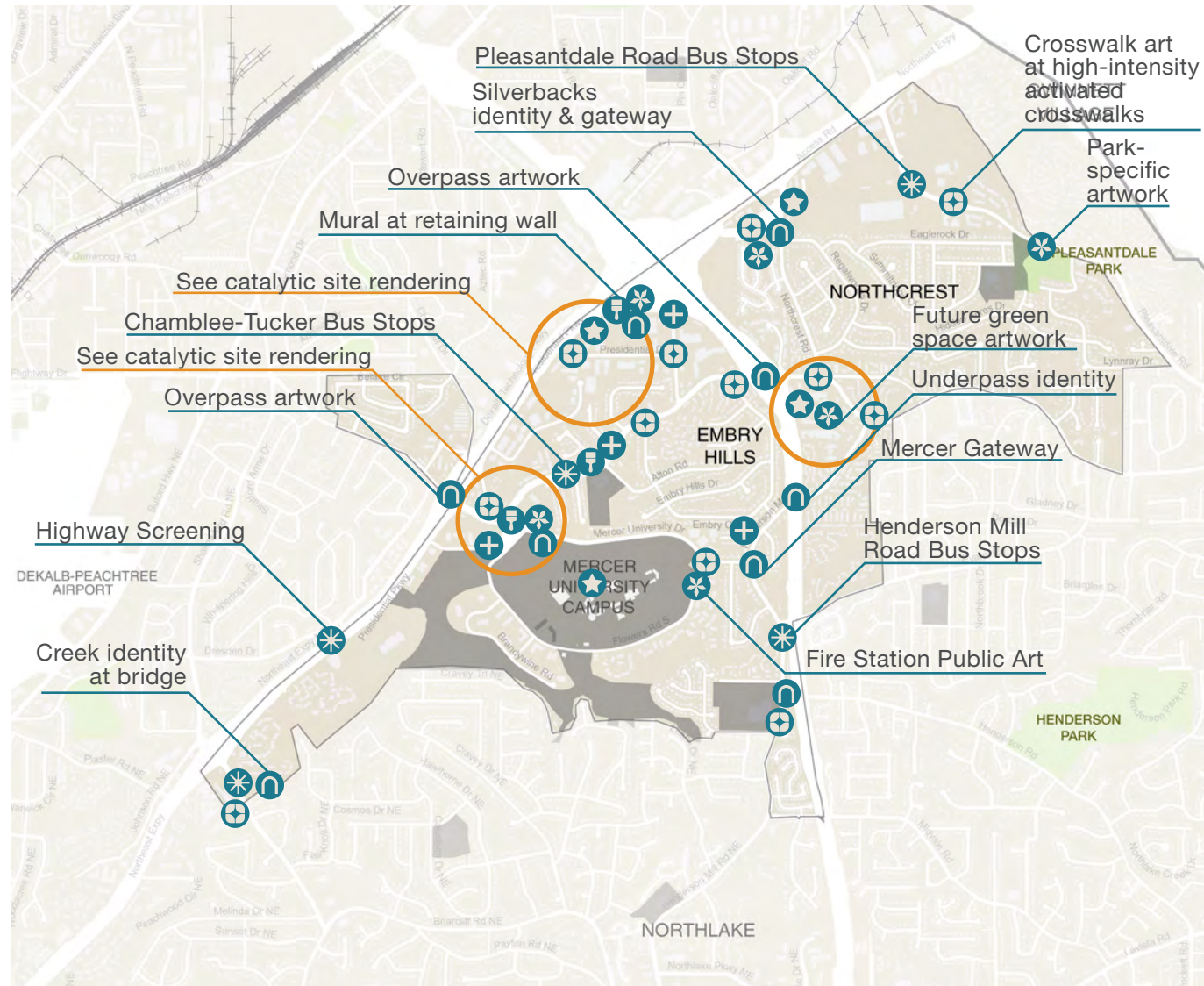
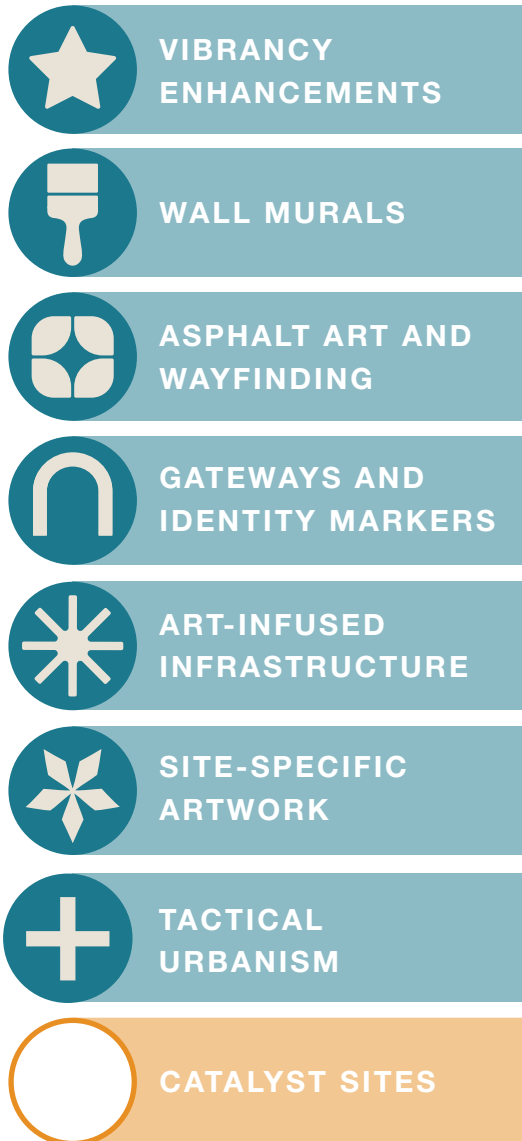
Create Opportunities for Private Business Participation

- Develop a public art tool-kit for businesses.
 - ♦ This includes: Resources such as approved paint color palettes, design guidance, and clear mural approval process to help businesses enhance their façades and adjacent public spaces without additional roadblocks. Maintain a curated and updated list or directory of artists available for commissions to make collaboration more accessible.
- Consider a micro-grant program. Offer small grants or matching funds to support and promote small-scale enhancements (storefront murals, creative signage, and outdoor seating areas) that contribute to overall vibrancy and neighborhood identity.

A DeKalb Arts Council is under development, and will be key to engaging artists and connecting the community to public art!

Art Typology Priority Locations

The study area offers vast opportunities to achieve the broader goals of pedestrian safety, wayfinding, connectivity, and identity through public art. These interventions should be grounded in what each site needs to enhance each of these goals. The map below highlights specific priority opportunities for intervention throughout the district.



Art Typologies

VIBRANCY ENHANCEMENTS

Vibrancy enhancements are low-barrier, high-impact interventions that introduce color, pattern, and visual interest into the built environment as a natural extension of routine maintenance and infrastructure improvements. Rather than requiring dedicated public art budgets, vibrancy enhancements are often deployed opportunistically, such as when a wall is already being painted or when a bike rack is already being replaced, but can also serve as quick, low-lift strategic interventions targeted at areas where visible attention and investment are most needed. The following enhancements, applied consistently, accumulate into a meaningful and cohesive visual identity.

- Utility boxes and poles: Painted a single bold color or simple color band instead of standard gray or black; one of the most immediately impactful and lowest-cost interventions available, requiring only a color specification decision at the time of routine maintenance
- Jersey barriers and low retaining walls: Painted in 2-3 color horizontal or diagonal stripes using standard paint and painter's tape, transforming ubiquitous concrete infrastructure into a cohesive visual element of the streetscape
- Bridge and pedestrian guardrails: Painted a signature corridor color instead of standard black or silver, creating visual continuity and identity along a walking or biking route
- Bollards and street furniture: Specifying color when purchasing or replacing bollards, bike racks, and benches rather than defaulting to standard black or gray; a procurement decision that costs nothing extra and accumulates into a coherent visual identity over time
- Underside of overpasses and bridge decks: Transforming what is typically one of the most visually oppressive elements of the pedestrian environment into a moment of surprise and delight

Budget	\$
Difficulty	●
Timeline	🕒



Precedents

FIGURE 47 - TOP: THIS BUSINESS OWNER AT THE PREP SITE WITHIN THE STUDY AREA IS ALREADY DEPLOYING SIMPLE VIBRANCY ENHANCEMENTS TO ENHANCE THEIR CORNER OF THE BUILDING. PHOTO 2026, COURTESY OF JESSICA FLÓREZ.

FIGURE 48 - BELOW: PART OF A LARGER PROJECT TO INVITE THE COMMUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH A SPACE NEAR A CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, THIS INSTALLATION SHOWS HOW SIMPLE USE OF COLOR CAN MAKE A POWERFUL CHANGE. "BRIGHT STRIPES INSTALLATION / TALLER KEN + ALLOY DESIGN" 21 SEP 2021. ARCHDAILY.



WALL MURALS

The study area's many blank vertical surfaces, including retaining walls, highway underpasses, and building façades, offer a remarkable opportunity to build identity and a sense of place from the ground up. Wall murals are one of the most immediate and cost-effective tools for making that vision visible, creating landmarks that residents and visitors recognize and remember. When rooted in local history, culture, or identity, murals do more than beautify—they tell a story about who belongs in a place and why it matters.

- **Considerations:** Murals require more planning and coordination than vibrancy enhancements, including surface preparation, artist selection, community input, and a maintenance plan for touch-ups and eventual restoration. Establishing a clear and streamlined approval process, including pre-approved surfaces, standard agreement templates, and maintenance expectations, will reduce friction and encourage more frequent implementation. Thoughtful placement is essential; murals should be sited where they are visible to pedestrians, reinforce wayfinding or safety goals, and are protected from vandalism where possible.
- **Potential implementation partners:** Local and regional artists and artist collectives, neighborhood and community organizations, businesses and property owners (for facade murals), GDOT and MARTA (for retaining walls and underpasses), schools, and local arts organizations who can assist with artist identification, community engagement, and fundraising.

Potential locations:

- Retaining walls along Chamblee-Tucker road have high visibility and potential impact. There are multiple retaining walls that would be suitable for murals. See walls near these addresses: 3001 Chamblee-Tucker road, 3313 Chamblee-Tucker road, 3337 Chamblee-Tucker Road, 3365 Chamblee-Tucker road, and 3365 Chamblee-Tucker road
- A retaining wall across from the Silverbacks - approximately 3522 Northcrest road
- Low walls along Pleasantdale road - approximately 3810 Pleasantdale road, 3502 Pleasantdale road, 3460 Pleasantdale road, 3382 Pleasantdale road



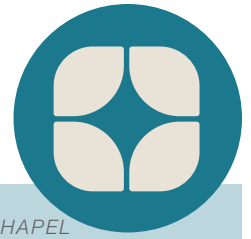
Precedents

FIGURE 49 - TOP: "HERE WE GO" BY TERESA AFTERNOON, 2024, LAWRENCEVILLE, GA. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

FIGURE 50 - BELOW: "A FLEETING MOMENT" BY TRUDY TRAN, 2023, ATLANTA, GA.



Budget	\$ \$
Difficulty	● ●
Timeline	🕒 🕒



ASPHALT ART AND WAYFINDING

The study area has identified pedestrian safety, wayfinding, and connectivity as primary needs—and asphalt art is uniquely positioned to address all three at once. Painted crosswalks and intersection murals slow vehicle speeds and increase driver awareness, directly improving pedestrian safety. Color-coded pathways and directional markings on the ground guide pedestrians naturally and intuitively toward trails, transit, and other amenities without relying on signage that can be overlooked or ignored.

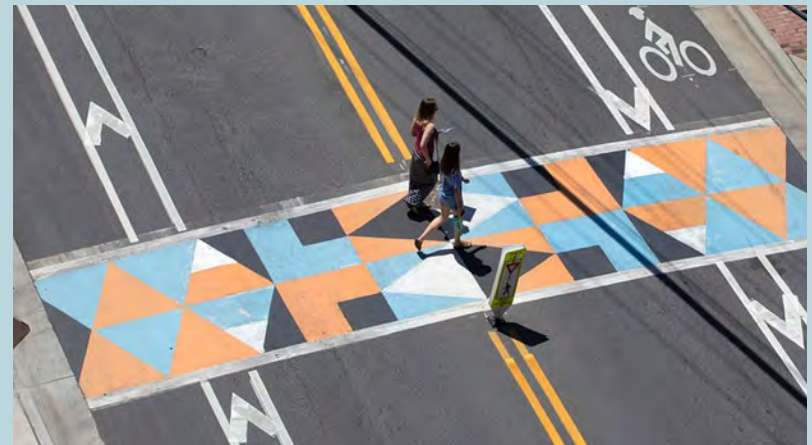
- **Considerations:** Surface preparation and paint or material selection are critical to durability — high-traffic areas require traffic-grade materials, such as Street-bond paint, that can withstand vehicle and pedestrian wear and UV exposure. A consistent design language and color palette should be established early to ensure that wayfinding elements read as a coherent system rather than disconnected individual projects. Maintenance and reapplication schedules should be built into the program from the outset, as faded or deteriorating asphalt art can undermine the sense of care and investment it is meant to convey. Coordination with traffic engineering and relevant right-of-way authorities will be required for any installations in or adjacent to roadways.
- **Potential implementation partners:** Local and regional artists and design firms, community organizations for participatory design processes, schools and youth programs for plaza and sidewalk installations, and adjacent property owners and businesses for installations on private plazas and parking areas. Bloomberg Philanthropies offers excellent guides, safety studies, and grant funding (a nonprofit partner may be required). Future projects could also be funded through SPLOST.

Budget	\$ \$
Difficulty	● ●
Timeline	🕒 🕒

Precedents

FIGURE 51 - TOP: "WALK" BY LOPE MAX DIAZ, 2016, CHAPEL HILL, NC. COURTESY OF TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL COMMUNITY ARTS & CULTURE

FIGURE 52 - BELOW: PAINTING OF THE BIDDLE STREET AND VALLEY STREET INTERSECTION IN BALTIMORE, MD, 2022, AS PART OF THE JOHNSTON SQUARE "BEE SAFE" ART CROSSWALK PROGRAM. IMAGE COURTESY OF MADE YOU LOOK BALTIMORE.





GATEWAYS AND IDENTITY MARKERS

One of the study area's most pressing needs is identity: A legible sense of place that distinguishes it from surrounding areas and gives residents, visitors, and investors a reason to take notice. Gateways and identity markers are among the most powerful tools for making that identity visible and legible at a glance. The study area includes sub-areas that each have their own distinct character, history, and community identity, and rather than imposing a single unified aesthetic, gateways and markers can be tailored to reflect and amplify what makes each area unique, while a consistent design vocabulary across all installations signals that these places are part of a larger, connected district.

- **Considerations:** Gateways and identity markers represent a higher level of investment than surface-based interventions and require careful planning around siting, structural engineering, material durability, lighting, and long-term maintenance. These elements should be located at true decision points and entry moments, where they will be seen by the greatest number of people. Identity markers carry symbolic weight and should reflect the values, culture, and aspirations of the people who live and work in the area.
- **Potential implementation partners:** Community and neighborhood organizations are essential partners for identity and design input, ensuring that markers reflect the distinct character of each sub-area rather than a generic or imposed aesthetic. Private developers and property owners should be engaged for installations on or near private property, and local foundations and business improvement districts are natural partners for funding and long-term stewardship. GDOT should be consulted early in the process for any overhead or roadway-adjacent installations. Given the complexity of developing a system of markers that is both individually responsive to each sub-area and cohesive across the broader district, engaging an outside consultant and artist team to develop a dedicated design framework and implementation plan is strongly recommended.

Budget	\$ \$ \$
Difficulty	• • •
Timeline	🕒 🕒 🕒

Precedents



FIGURE 53 - LEFT:
CASTLEBERRY HILL
WELCOME SIGN, ATLANTA,
GA. PHOTO POSTED BY
BURNAWAY, WIKIMEDIA
COMMONS

FIGURE 54 - BELOW:
LINCOLN SQUARE GATEWAY,
CHICAGO, IL. PHOTO 2024
BY CHRISTINE ZWOLINSKI/
THECHICAGOGOODLIFE.
COM.



ART-INFUSED INFRASTRUCTURE

Art-infused infrastructure refers to the integration of artistic design directly into functional infrastructure elements. This includes bus shelters and transit waiting areas designed as distinctive, place-specific installations rather than generic commercial structures; decorative or patterned fencing and railings on highway overpasses and pedestrian bridges; site-designed benches, seating walls, and bike racks that function as sculpture as well as furniture; and trailheads and trail connection points that are designed as intentional arrival and departure experiences. The artistic quality is built in from the start, not added on afterward, making it often no more expensive or complex to maintain than standard infrastructure.

- **Considerations:** The key to successful art-infused infrastructure is early integration — artistic design intent must be established at the beginning of an infrastructure project, not retrofitted at the end. This requires close coordination between engineers, planners, and artists or designers from the outset. Procurement processes may need to be adapted to accommodate artist or design firm involvement alongside traditional infrastructure contractors. Material selection should prioritize durability and ease of maintenance. Establishing design standards and pre-approved templates for common elements such as benches and bike racks can streamline implementation and ensure visual consistency across the study area.
- **Potential implementation partners:** GDOT for overpass and roadway-adjacent infrastructure; MARTA for bus shelter design and installation; local artists and design firms with experience in fabrication and public space design; and private developers and property owners for infrastructure elements within or adjacent to development sites. These types of projects are ripe for various funding mechanisms, public (including SPLOST) and private, often in partnership with a nonprofit organization.

Budget	\$ \$ \$
Difficulty	● ● ●
Timeline	🕒 🕒 🕒



Precedents

FIGURE 55 - TOP: THIS BUS SHELTER INCORPORATES THE HISTORY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN WHICH IT RESIDES. A TAPESTRY OF ROGERS ROAD BY KIARA CHATTERJEE, 2021, CHAPEL HILL, NC. PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL COMMUNITY ARTS & CULTURE.

FIGURE 56 - BELOW: BRIDGE OF HOPE, 2020, MARIETTA, GA. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIETTA ARTS COUNCIL.





SITE-SPECIFIC ARTWORK

Site-specific artwork requires the most significant investment of time, resources, and process of any typology in this framework. A thorough community engagement process is essential to ensure that the work reflects the values and identity of the people it represents. Artist selection should be conducted through a transparent and inclusive process, and should prioritize artists with demonstrated experience in public, community-engaged work. Budgets should account not only for artist fees and fabrication but for site preparation, structural engineering where required, lighting, insurance, and a long-term maintenance and conservation plan. Despite the greater investment required, site-specific works often deliver outsized returns in community pride, media attention, placemaking impact, and long-term economic value.

Potential implementation partners: Local, regional, and potentially national artists and artist teams with public art experience; community and neighborhood organizations as essential partners in the engagement and selection process; local arts agencies as potential funding sources and administrative partners; private developers seeking to meet public art requirements or community benefit commitments; foundations and corporate sponsors for supplemental funding; and universities and cultural institutions that may have interest in co-presenting or supporting works of significant artistic ambition.

Budget	\$ \$ \$
Difficulty	● ● ●
Timeline	🕒 🕒 🕒

See Appendix F for additional artist engagement process, findings, and recommendations.

Precedents

FIGURE 57 - MUTUALITIES; LIVES INTERWOVEN, BY FORLANO DESIGN, 2019, SHENTON PARK, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.
FIGURE 58 - ARLINGTON, VA. "LUMINOUS BODIES" BY CLIFF GARTEN. INSTALLED 2020. PHOTO BY JEREMY GREEN.



TACTICAL URBANISM

Tactical urbanism are quickly implemented projects using short-term and low-cost strategies to improve both safety and aesthetics. Projects include temporary protected bike lanes or corner curb extensions using paint and bike lane delineators. These interventions can later be built out with more permanent or long-lasting interventions, such as hard barriers, planters, or overall roadway improvements. These interventions can test project efficacy and illustrate a need for improvements before commitment to expensive permanent infrastructure.

- Common materials for tactical urbanism include: Traffic cones, plastic jersey barriers, high-performance delineator posts, armadillos, planters, paint.
- Common implementation of tactical urbanism is for curb extensions, creating pedestrian plazas, parklets, and pop-up bike lanes.
- Considerations: Creating an accessible, easy method for permitting and safe deployment should be considered. Various government programs exist with applications and facilitators - see the Portland street or structure painting permit website as an example. (<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/permitting/portland-streets/street-painting>) Or see the City of Atlanta Tactical Urbanism guide (<https://tacticalurbanismguide.com>) for additional information and tactical urbanism guides.
- Potential implementation partners: Tactical urbanism can be led by anyone! Partners can include DeKalb agencies, neighborhood and community organizations, local and regional artists, or businesses and property owners.

Tactical urbanism works best when responding to community demands and interests. Below are some possible locations in the study area for tactical urbanism projects.

- Curb extension at Windsor Forest Road and Chamblee-Tucker Road
- Curb extensions at applicable residential roadway intersections along Henderson Mill Road (Balmoral Drive, Henderson Mill condominiums entrance, etc.)
- Curb extension at Valleybluff Way and Pleasantdale Road
- Lane width reduction or parking protected bike lanes along the northern portion of Presidential Parkway
- Lane width reduction along Woodcock Boulevard

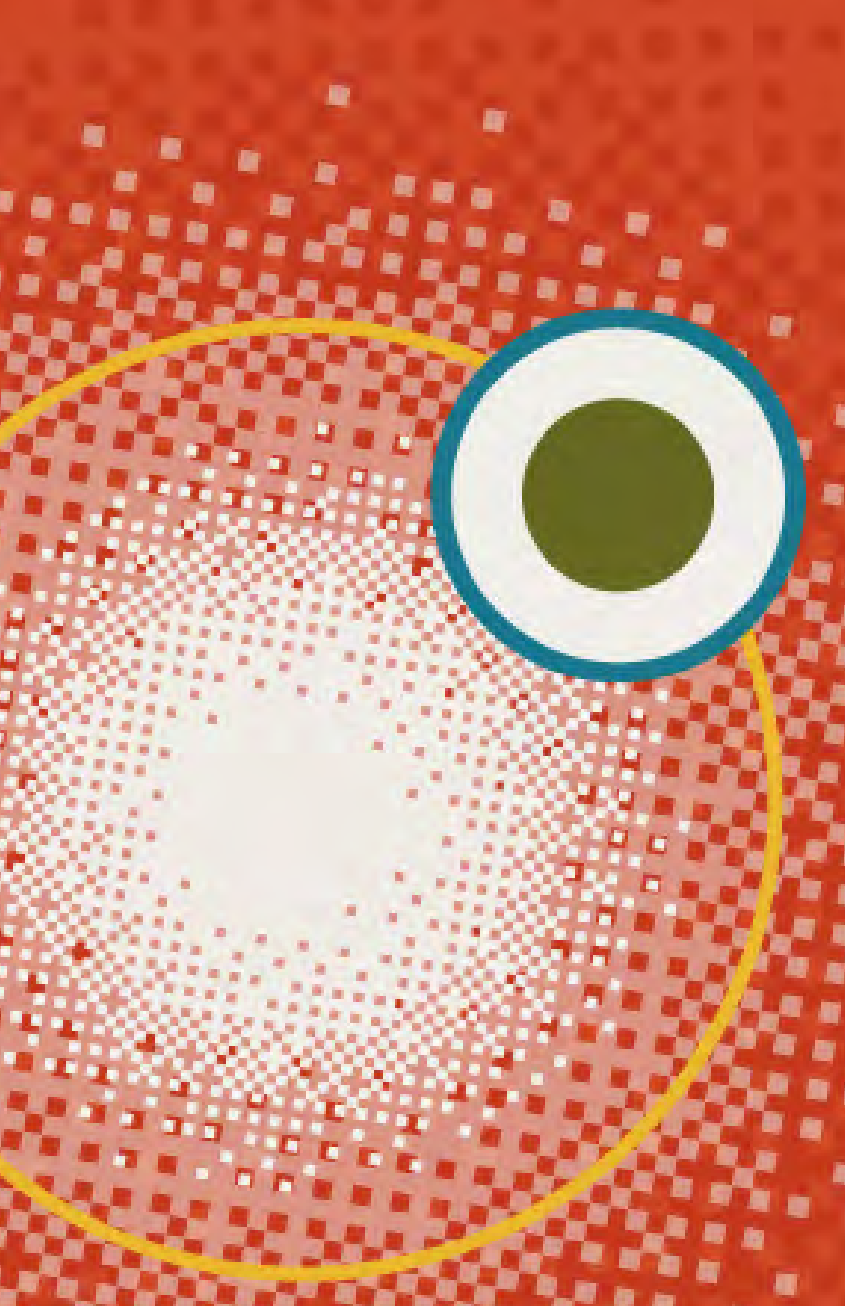


Precedents

FIGURE 59 - TOP: CHOSEWOOD PARK, ATLANTA. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA TACTICAL URBANISM GUIDE.
FIGURE 60 - BELOW: BOULEVARD GRANADA TACTICAL WALK LANE IN ATLANTA GEORGIA. IMAGE COURTESY OF ATLANTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Budget	\$
Difficulty	●
Timeline	🕒



4.3

CATALYST SITES & CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

Criteria for Catalyst Sites

CATALYST AREA IDENTIFICATION AND SCORING

Nodes and regions within the study area were assessed to understand the areas of greatest opportunity for catalytic development. The analysis synthesized existing needs and overlaid all recommendations to identify areas with the greatest concentration of strategies, highlighting the sites with the highest need and potential impact.

These areas were then scored using a data-driven prioritization process to provide an objective analysis of which sites would provide the most benefit. Eight prioritization criteria were determined to score sites, each worth one point, giving a maximum score of fourteen points. The graphic at right lists each scoring criteria with a description of the threshold that resulted in a one point score. The highest scoring areas were selected for further development and planning, and brought to the community to get their most desired improvements.

	ID	Prioritization Criteria								Difficulty (Project Complexity and Partnerships Required)	Total Score
		Aging Commercial Buildings - Redevelopment Opportunity	Future Trail Alignment Through Area (+2 for Regional Trail, +1 for Local Trail)	Community Space Potential (Visibility (+1), Gathering Potential (+1))	Access To Transit (NextGen Bus)	Access to Community Destination (School, Park)	Regional Development Opportunity (2) Local Development Opportunity (1)	Underutilized Parcels (Vacant or with parking > 30% of Site Area)	Public Input - Top 4, ranked		
A	Embry Village Shopping Center	1	1	2	1	0	2	1	4	-1	11
B	Mercer and Chamblee-Tucker Intersection	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	-1	10
C	Presidential Parkway - PREP Area	1	2	2	0	0	2	0	3	-1	9
	Warren Tech Area	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	7
	Henderson Middle & Henderson Mill Road Area	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	7
	Shallowford Road Intersection	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	-1	6
	Pleasantdale Park Area	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	5
	Atlanta Silverbacks Area	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	-1	3

FIGURE 61 - CATALYST SITE PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA



Aging Commercial

Area has commercial businesses, the majority more than 30 years old.



Future Trail Alignment Through Area

Planned trail alignment, such as the Peachtree Creek or Mercer Trails.



Community Space Potential

Area has high visibility from a major vehicular road, or has potential to be a gathering place.



Access to Transit

A bus stop is in close proximity to the catalyst site.



Access to Community Destination

Corridor is within 1/4 mile of a park, school, or other activity center.



Development Opportunity

Area is identified as a regional or local development opportunity in the plan.



Underutilized Parcels

The site has vacant parcels or areas where parking is >30% of the site area.



Public Input

Area was ranked highly in community engagement.



Difficulty

Complexity of the project, coordination and partnerships required

Catalyst Site Public Input

An initial set of eight catalyst sites was identified through a layered analysis focused on areas of highest need, strategic importance, and redevelopment potential. The community then played a key role in shaping priorities by voting on these locations, as shown in the map below. This collaborative process resulted in Embry Village Shopping Center, the Mercer Intersection, and the Presidential PREP Parkway site being ranked as the highest priorities for future investment.

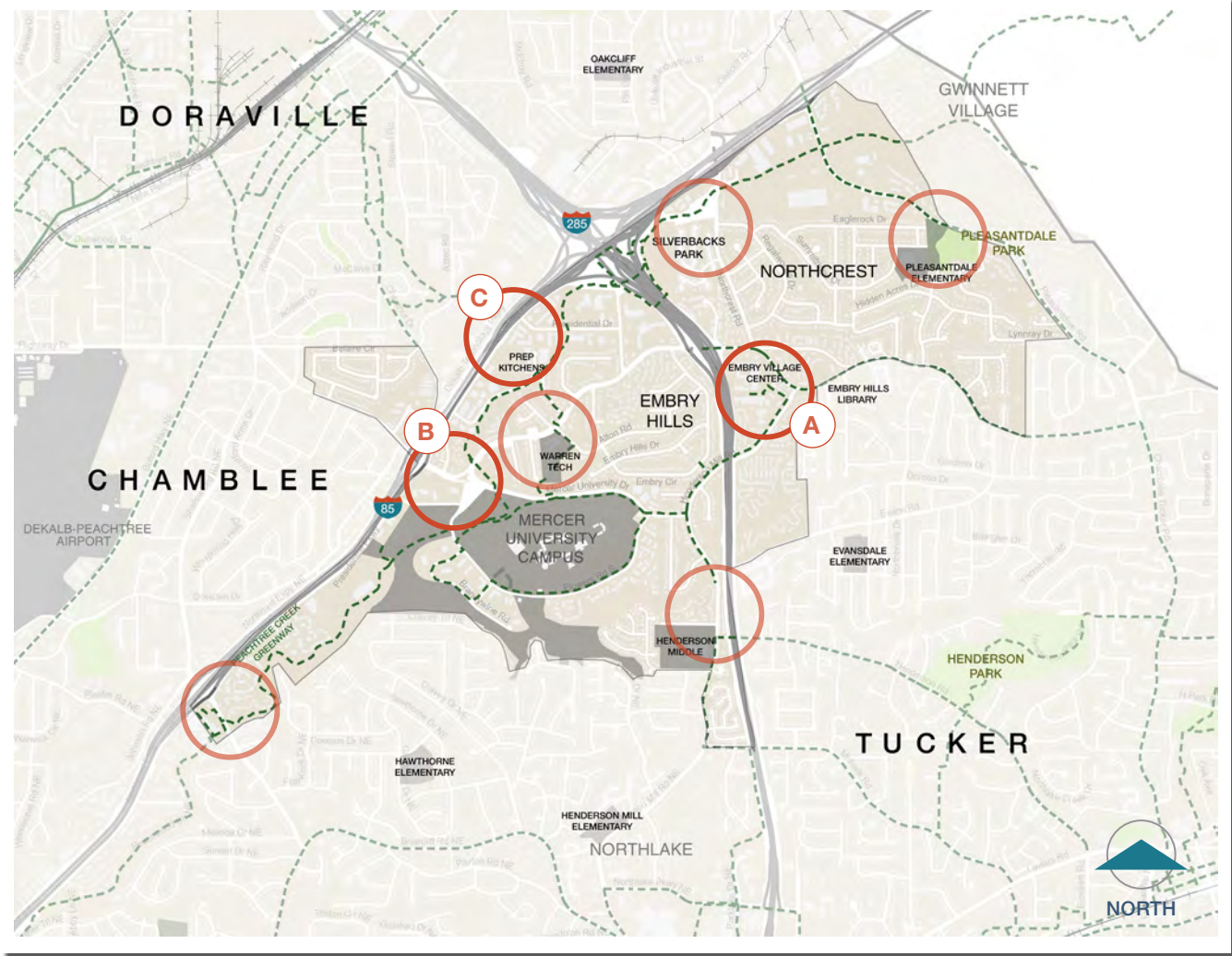
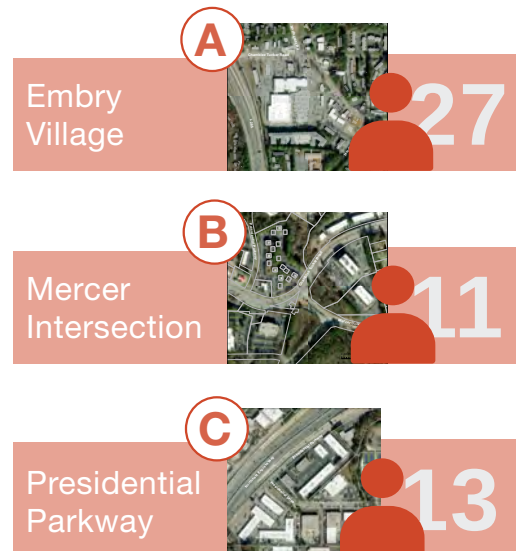


FIGURE 62 - CATALYST SITE VOTING MAP

Catalyst Site A

EMBRY VILLAGE

This catalyst site is located at the location of Embry Village Shopping center, a local hub for commerce at a key intersection of Northcrest and Embry Hills. This area presents a lot of redevelopment potential due to the large percentage of parking lot on the site, minimal grading concerns, highway visibility, major road accessibility, and age of existing structures. The proposed design plan illustrates how future development can be built out with added community amenities, more housing, and neighborhood services.

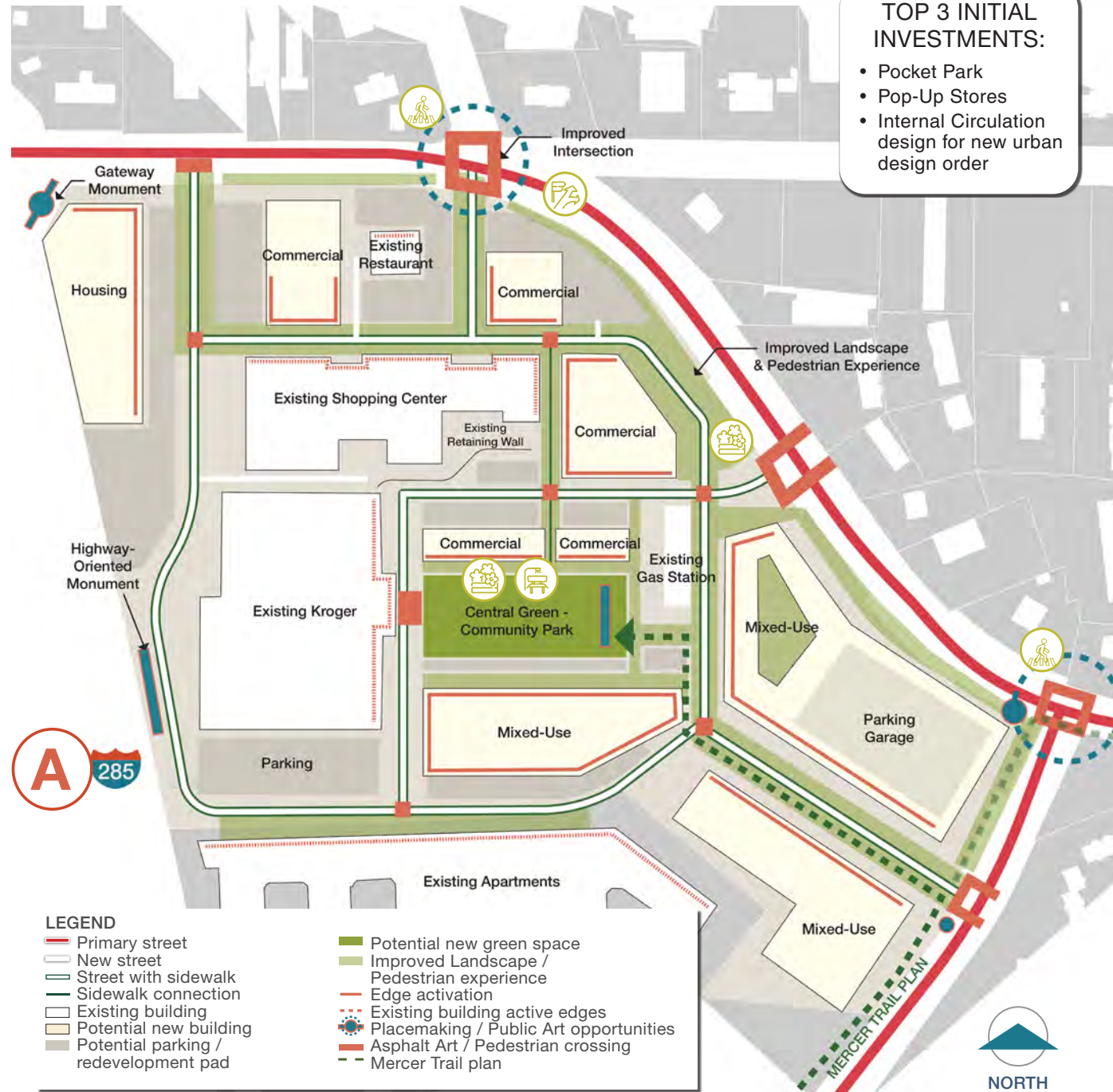




FIGURE 63 - EMBRY VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER CATALYST SITE RENDERING



PROPOSED CATALYST SITE INTERVENTIONS



SAFETY ENHANCEMENT

The proximity of drive ways and entryways creates vehicular and accessibility conflicts. The intersections along Chamblee-Tucker Road are also dangerous and could use pedestrian enhancements to create safer connections.



SIGNAGE / KIOSKS

Signage specifically at the major intersections could use a refresh and added identity. Wayfinding and directional signage for people to walk to local businesses within the development is also needed. The new sign code in progress will promote modernizing signage in the area.



GATEWAYS

A coordinated gateway strategy can brand the development as a cohesive destination. Anchoring gateways at prominent corners helps define thresholds, mark points of arrival, and reinforce an iconic district identity.



ART

Linear art elements along the highway and Chamblee-Tucker could establish a brand across the entire corridor and capture visitors from the highway.



SITE AMENITIES / SITE DESIGN

The existing layout lacks a coherent urban structure, with buildings dispersed across the site and no defined street edge or spatial hierarchy. Opportunities to introduce coordinated design standards for setbacks, frontage conditions, and site organization can shape a more cohesive, people-oriented place.



LANDSCAPE

The majority of the parcel is paved. Introducing landscape elements such as shade trees, planting beds, and permeable surfaces can mitigate the heat island effect and create a more comfortable, human-scaled environment.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

The sidewalk along Chamblee-Tucker is narrow, with a small landscape buffer and limited room for transit infrastructure connections. A reconfigured streetscape with expanded pedestrian clear zones, a defined furnishing zone, and consistent planting can improve safety, comfort, and visual continuity along the corridor.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

The three design concepts represent a spectrum of redevelopment intensity: **cautious, balanced, and bold**. The cautious strategy emphasizes low-impact activation through pop-up shops and park development, allowing flexibility and short-term implementation. The balanced scenario introduces targeted infill within the existing large parcels, framing new development around a central open space to enhance connectivity and place-making. The bold approach rethinks the site entirely, proposing full-scale redevelopment to transform the area into a high-performing, integrated district. The full design, analysis, and phasing plan is included in appendix E.



SHORT
TERM

1 CAUTIOUS

- Tactical / Incremental
- Focuses on parking lot activation

2 BALANCED

- Master planned, focuses on redevelopment of underutilized parking lots
- Preserves all existing buildings; creates precedent for future areas

3 BOLD

- Master planned, focuses on redevelopment of underutilized parking lots and existing buildings
- Parcel consolidation & Multiple redevelopment partners

LONG
TERM

Catalyst Site B

MERCER INTERSECTION

This catalyst site is at the key intersection of Chamblee-Tucker and Mercer University Drive. This area acts as a gateway into Mercer University and a gateway into the Embury Hills area. Traffic counts show this is one of the busiest intersections in the study area. Traffic movements are both dangerous and confusing to navigate for vehicles and pedestrians. Key recommendations to improve the safety of the area is to remove the slip lane and repurpose it for a public park. Other recommendations include wall murals, intersection design, monuments and gateways to direct everyone where they need to go and create an iconic place. Proposed rezonings to Multi-Family Residential (MR-1) can also promote residential infill and inter-parcel connectivity in this area.

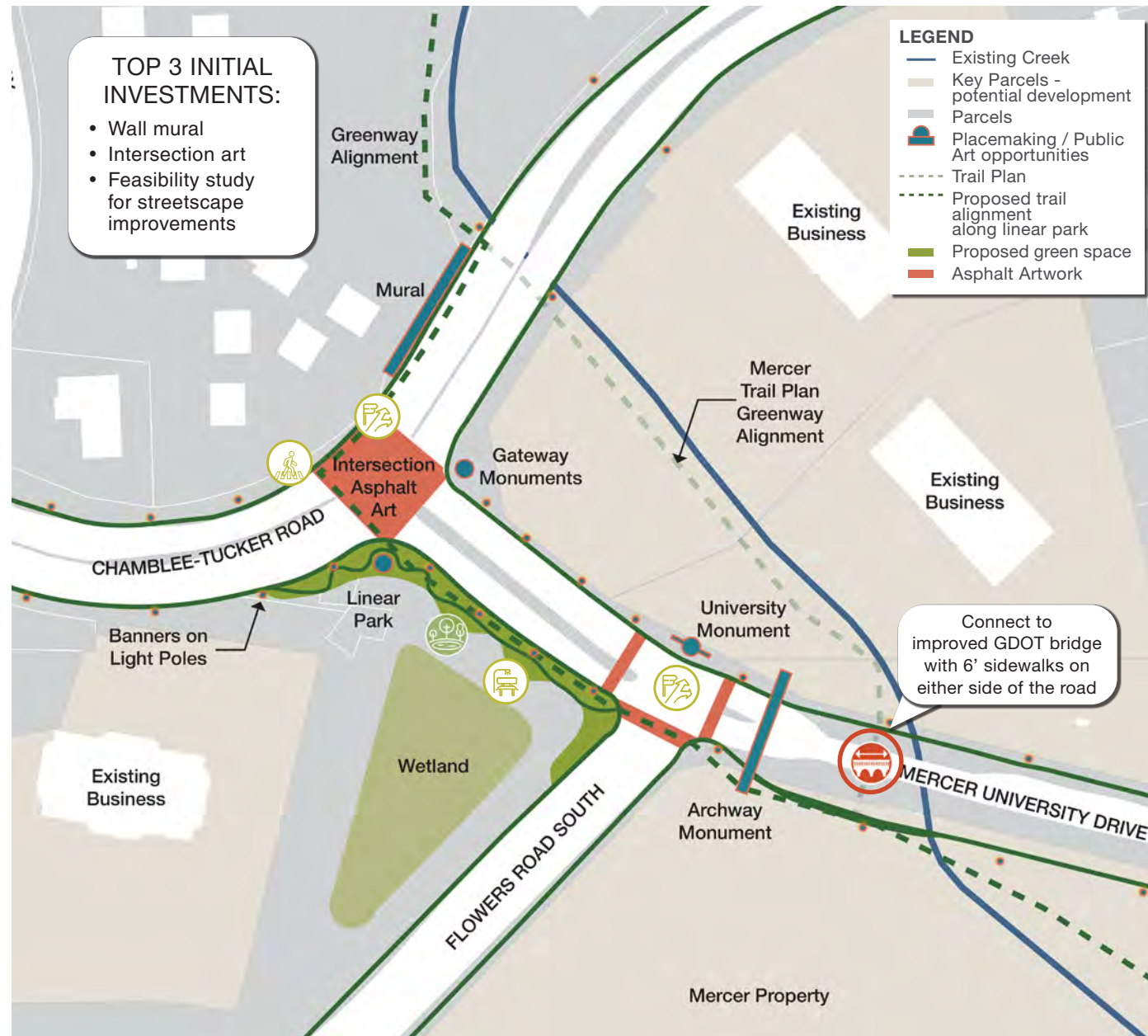


FIGURE 65 - CATALYTIC SITE B - MERCER INTERSECTION



FIGURE 66 - MERCER AND CHAMBLEE-TUCKER INTERSECTION CATALYST SITE

PROPOSED CATALYST SITE INTERVENTIONS



SAFETY ENHANCEMENT

The opportunity to remove the slip lane will restrict through movement, slow traffic, and create a safer environment for all people. Other visibility enhancements and added crosswalks will create a safer environment.



SIGNAGE / KIOSKS

Wayfinding signage, kiosks, and gateways will improve navigation to the various destinations in this node. Multiple wayfinding elements are needed specifically along Chamblee-Tucker Road.



GATEWAYS

Gateways are needed to identify the major destinations of this area such as Mercer University. This will help navigate visitors to the key locations and create a sense of place to this confusing intersection.



ART

Adding art to the intersections will not only create a sense of place but also increase safety and navigability of this node. The existing wall has been identified as the quick win mural to jump-start improvements for this node.



SITE AMENITIES / SITE DESIGN

Seating, planters, and shade structures can be added along the new linear park and nearby bus stops along Chamblee-Tucker Road.



LANDSCAPE

This intersection is surrounded by open space within the floodplain. Areas to make the natural areas accessible for pockets of recreation should be evaluated with the trail alignment.



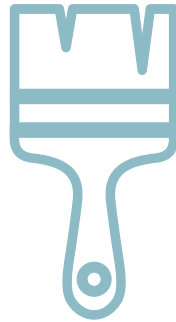
STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Removing the slip lane is a key opportunity that would to slow traffic, improve safety, and add space for pedestrian and recreation infrastructure. The alignment of the future Peachtree Creek Greenway needs to be brought to this intersection to connect people to the developments and bus routes along Chamblee-Tucker Road. The narrow bridge crossing into Mercer University would also need improvements to gain pedestrian or cyclist accessibility.



Mural Engagement and Design

Two artists were chosen to develop mural designs based on the colors and values selected by the community in Design Workshop 2. Both designs, shown to the right, were brought to the community for a vote. 80% of the votes preferred mural option one. During this engagement process, the community expressed they desired additional engagement around the mural. The mural design will be finalized at a later date, based upon this collaborative and community-centered process.



Option 1



Option 2

Diverse Mix of cultures, backgrounds, and activities	Connected Human connection, gathering spaces, and walkability	Active Sports, parks, movement through the area, and public space
Collaborative Co-creation between artists, residents, businesses, and the county	Welcoming Inclusion, participation, and community-driven engagement	Rooted Local history and mid-century origins of the neighborhood

See Appendix F for additional artist mural engagement materials.

FIGURE 67 - ARTIST MURAL INITIAL DESIGNS

Catalyst Site C

PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY

This catalyst site is located in the area surrounding Presidential Parkway and Presidential Drive. This area contains many amenities, such as ITP Training Academy, a rock climbing gym, an animal shelter, and PREP kitchen. These amenities would benefit from an approachable and inviting area. Catalyst recommendations for this node focus on the accessible greenspace category to jumpstart trail development, screen the highway, preserve the floodplain, and connect people to development.

TOP 3 INITIAL INVESTMENTS:

- Gateway signage at key entry points
- Streetscape improvements
- Parklets



FIGURE 68 - CATALYST SITE C - PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY





FIGURE 69 - PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY CATALYST SITE RENDERING

PROPOSED CATALYST SITE INTERVENTIONS



SAFETY ENHANCEMENT

Visibility improvements, pedestrian crossings, and sidewalks are proposed to enhance walkability and safety.



SIGNAGE / KIOSKS

Wayfinding signage, kiosks, and gateways will improve navigation and highlight key destinations in this node.



GATEWAYS

Signature entry points and gateway markers to establish a sense of place and arrival. Gateway scale is critical as well, since this area is highly visible from the highway and easily accessible from nearby major roads.



ART

In this node specific opportunities to create a sense of place include the mural on the existing wall, crosswalk art, and sculpture / identity at the trailhead.



SITE AMENITIES / SITE DESIGN

Seating, planters, shade structures, and small-scale improvements can be added at the trailhead or along new sidewalks to enhance comfort.



LANDSCAPE

A landscape buffer and green infrastructure is needed to buffer the highway from the development zone to increase the comfortability in this area. Preservation standards will also need to be established along the creek in conjunction with the trail addition.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

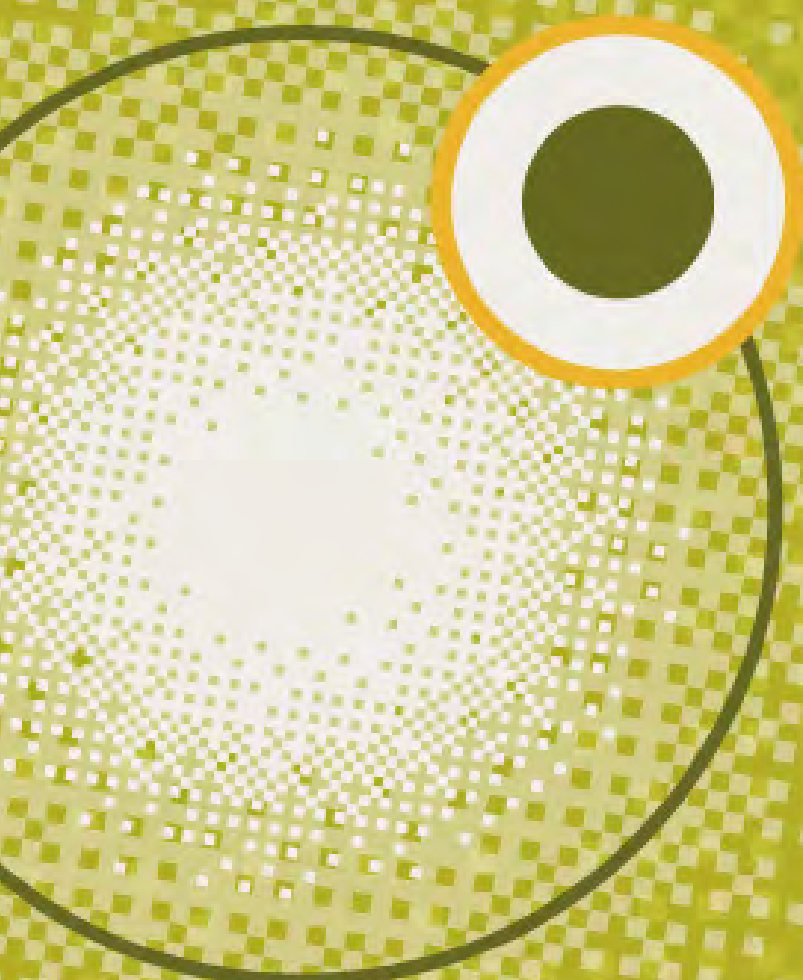
Overall streetscape improvements in this node include sidewalk additions, buffers, and intersection safety enhancements. The narrow bridge could hinder the addition of these elements.





CHAPTER 5

Implementation & Action Plan



5.1 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

How to Use This Plan

This Implementation & Action Plan translates the vision for Embry Hills-Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities into a clear path forward, focused on delivery, alignment, and momentum. Rather than treating projects as standalone efforts, this plan organizes actions around near-term wins, catalytic investments, and long-term infrastructure improvements that reinforce one another over time. Implementation will require coordinated leadership across County departments, agencies, and partners, with a strong emphasis on leveraging public investment to unlock private development. Early actions—such as pilot projects, site activation, and targeted improvements—are designed to build confidence, demonstrate change, and position the corridor for larger-scale transformation. As conditions evolve, this plan should serve as a flexible roadmap, guiding decision-making, prioritizing resources, and ensuring that progress remains grounded in community priorities and measurable outcomes.



**Accomplishing
the Vision**

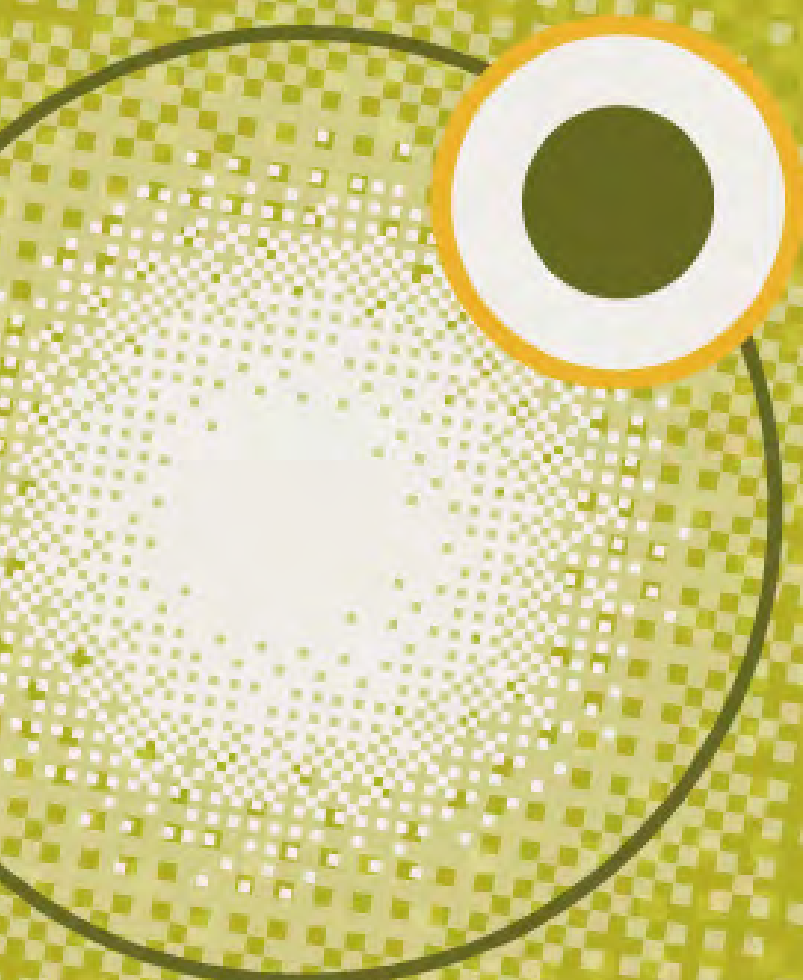
Roles and Responsibilities

Enacting the plan requires committed partners, coordinated leadership, and continued support. Below are key responsibilities of the diverse partners required to implement community priorities.

Lead Agency / Partner	Roles & Responsibilities
DeKalb County Parks & Recreation	Lead delivery of trailhead development, park enhancements, open space programming, and potential shared use agreements for park and open space opportunities - Coordinate Pleasantdale Park activation + art integration - Manage maintenance, operations, and long-term stewardship of green spaces - Partner on Peachtree Creek Greenway connections and trail expansion - Coordinate to mitigate park gaps identified in Parks & Recreation Master Plan
DeKalb County Long Range Planning & Sustainability (Zoning / Community Development)	- Lead zoning overlays and regulatory updates aligned with corridor vision - Advance Small Area Plan (SAP) for Embry Village Center - Coordinate development review, re-zonings, and land use policy alignment - Support housing strategy implementation (missing middle, workforce housing)
DeKalb County Transportation / Public Works	Implement mobility and safety improvements (Chamblee-Tucker, Mercer University Drive intersections) - Deliver streetscape enhancements, sidewalks, and corridor connectivity - Coordinate with GDOT on state routes and major intersections - Advance traffic calming and multi-modal improvements
Decide DeKalb / Economic Development	- Lead business recruitment, retention, and catalyst site marketing - Package and promote key redevelopment sites (Embry Village, corridor nodes) - Coordinate developer outreach and deal structuring - Support public-private partnerships and incentive alignment
Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)	Provide technical assistance, data, and funding alignment (LCI, TAP, SS4A) - Support regional coordination and grant applications - Align project with regional mobility, housing, and economic strategies - Assist with performance tracking and implementation benchmarking

Roles and Responsibilities, Continued

Lead Agency / Partner	Roles & Responsibilities
Community-Based Organizations	- Lead community engagement, stewardship, and programming - Support placemaking, cultural storytelling, and public art initiatives - Partner on activation of parks, trails, and neighborhood spaces - Embed community voice is embedded in implementation
Elected Officials (County Commissioners)	- Champion project vision and implementation priorities - Allocate funding (SPLOST, discretionary funds, capital budgets) - Advocate for state and regional funding support - Maintain accountability and alignment across departments
Workforce Partners (Mercer University, Technical College System, Chamber, etc.)	- Align training programs with targeted industries (healthcare, logistics, tech) - Support workforce pipelines tied to redevelopment sites - Partner with employers on job placement and skill-building programs - Integrate workforce strategy with economic development efforts
Community Advisory Group (PAG / Stakeholder Group)	- Provide ongoing feedback during implementation phases - Serve as bridge between DeKalb County and community stakeholders - Help prioritize early action projects and investments - Support community accountability and transparency
Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)	- Lead design and implementation of improvements on state routes - Coordinate on intersection upgrades, safety improvements, and corridor design - Support funding through GDOT programs and federal transportation funds - Review and approve infrastructure changes along Presidential Parkway
Developers / Private Sector	- Deliver mixed-use, housing, and commercial redevelopment projects - Partner with DeKalb County on trailhead integration and public space contributions - Activate ground-floor retail and destination uses along corridor - Leverage incentives and align with corridor vision + design guidelines



5.2

PRIORITY PROJECTS & PHASING

Priority Projects & Phasing: Short-Term Actions

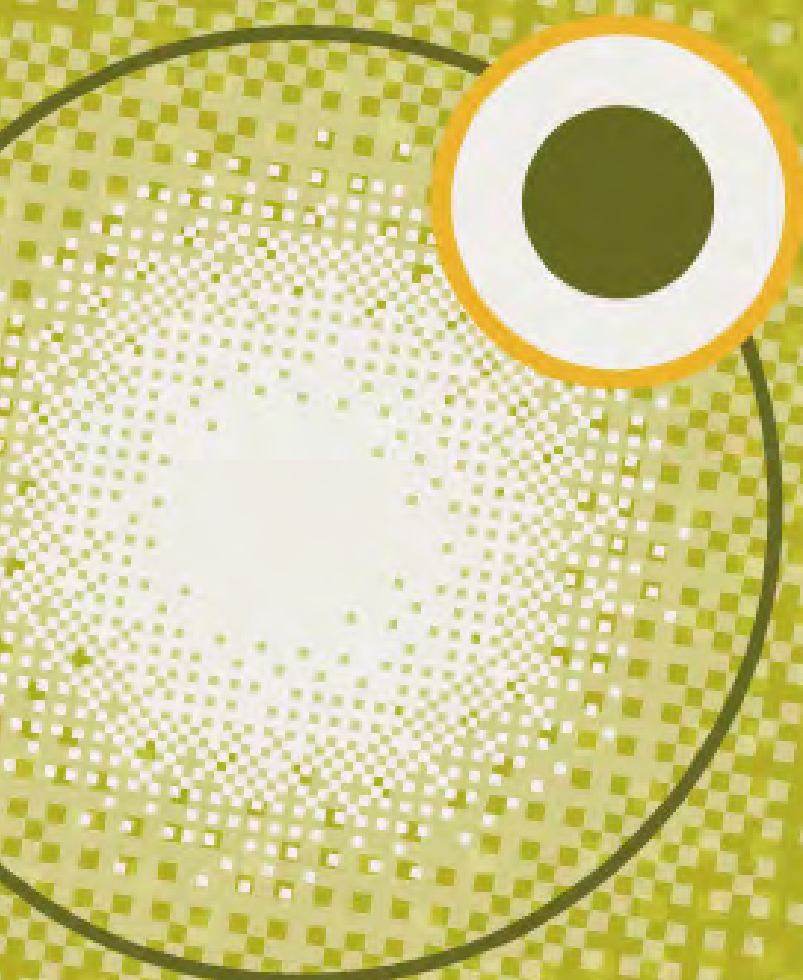
Priority	Category	#	Item	Partners	Funding Source
Short-Term 1-5 Years	Safe Streets	1	Mercer Intersection mural	DeKalb County (District 1 & 7), Local Artists	Commissioner Discretionary Funds (DeKalb County)
	Safe Streets	2	Walkability Audit		
	Open Space	3	Neighborhood park in Embry Village	DeKalb Parks & Rec, Property Owners, Community Groups	SPLOST, Park Pride Grants, Land Dedication
	Catalytic Development	4	Pop-up shops (local businesses, incubator store-fronts) in Embry Village	Property Owners, Local Businesses, Decide DeKalb	Small Business Grants, Private Investment
	Safe Streets	5	Neighborhood branding and signage plan	DeKalb County, Civic Associations	LCI Implementation Funds, County General Fund
	Safe Streets	6	Bridge identity fencing along Shallowford Road	GDOT, DeKalb County	GDOT Enhancement Funds, TAP
	Safe Streets	7	Henderson Mill intersection art	DeKalb County, Local Artists, DeKalb Arts Council	Arts Grants, Sponsorships
	Catalytic Development	8	Sports and economic strategy for PREP Kitchen/ ITP Training Academy area	Decide DeKalb, Private Operators, Chamber	Economic Development Funds, Private Investment
	Open Space	9	Pleasantdale Park art installation	DeKalb Parks & Rec, Arts Organizations	SPLOST, Arts Grants
	Safe Streets	10	Feasibility study for Chamblee Tucker and Mercer intersection	DeKalb County, GDOT, ARC, Consultants	ARC, SS4A Planning Grants
	Safe Streets	11	Chamblee-Tucker Safety Action Plan (SS4A)	DeKalb County, GDOT, ARC	SS4A, HSIP
	Open Space	12	Trailhead along new development on Presidential Parkway	Developers, DeKalb County, ARC	Developer Contributions, Impact Fees, LCI
	Safe Streets	13	Branding and signage plan for district	DeKalb County, Local Businesses, CID (future)	LCI, Private Sponsorships

Priority Projects & Phasing: Mid-Term Actions

Priority	Category	#	Item	Partners	Funding Source
Mid-Term 5-10 Years	Catalytic Development	1	Small Area Plan (SAP) for Embry Village Center	DeKalb County, Property Owners, ARC, Consultants	LCI, County Planning Funds
	Open Space	2	Peachtree Creek Greenway design	ARC, DeKalb County, PATH Foundation	Federal Grants (RAISE/TAP), Philanthropy
	Safe Streets	3	Highway gateway on interchange of I-285 and I-85	GDOT, DeKalb County, Private Sponsors	GDOT, Sponsorships
	Safe Streets	4	Gateways for Mercer University Campus	Mercer University, DeKalb County	Mercer University Investment, Matching Grants
	Catalytic Development	5	Pop-Up or incubator small businesses and park for Presidential Parkway node	Developers, DeKalb County	PPP, Temporary Activation Grants
	Catalytic Development	6	Urban design guidelines for Presidential Parkway	DeKalb County, Consultants	County Planning Funds
	Safe Streets	7	Highway screening elements along Presidential Parkway	GDOT, DeKalb County	GDOT, Federal Transportation Funds
	Safe Streets	8	Shallowford road development standards	DeKalb County	Zoning Updates, County Ordinance
	Safe Streets	9	Infill strategy for Mercer intersections	Developers, Decide DeKalb	Private Investment, Opportunity Zones
	Open Space	10	Shared-use agreements for Warren Tech and Mercer University	Mercer University, Warren Tech	Institutional Agreements, Grants
	Open Space	11	Trailhead along new development on Presidential Parkway	Developers, DeKalb County, ARC	Developer Contributions, Impact Fees, LCI
	Safe Streets	12	Branding and signage plan for district	DeKalb County, Local Businesses, CID (future)	LCI, Private Sponsorships

Priority Projects & Phasing: Long-Term Actions

Priority	Category	#	Item	Partners	Funding Source
Long-Term 10+ Years	Safe Streets	1	Intersection improvements Mercer intersection	GDOT, DeKalb County	Federal Transportation Funds, GDOT
	Open space	2	Trailhead enhancements along Peachtree Greenway	ARC, PATH Foundation, DeKalb County	Federal + Philanthropic Funding
	Safe Streets	3	Highway mural along Presidential Parkway	GDOT, Artists, Sponsors	Arts Grants, Sponsorships
	Safe Streets	4	Secondary streetscape improvements	DeKalb County	SPLOST, LCI Implementation
	Safe Streets	5	Underpass art under I-285	GDOT, Artists	Arts + Transportation Enhancement Funds
	Safe Streets	5	Silverbacks identity & gateway	Silverbacks, DeKalb County, GDOT, Artists	Arts + Transportation Enhancement Funds
	Safe Streets	6	Pleasantdale Road streetscape improvements	DeKalb County, GDOT	SPLOST, Federal Grants
	Catalytic Development	7	SAP Implementation for Embry Village Center	DeKalb County, Property Owners, ARC, Consultants	



5.3

FUNDING, PARTNERSHIPS, & DELIVERY

Funding sources

PUBLIC FUNDING

Grant funding
Tax Revenue
Tax Increment Financing

STATE & REGIONAL TOOLS

Zoning and Development Regulations
Development Incentives

PHILANTHROPIC & PRIVATE SOURCES

Developer and Private Sector Contributions

INNOVATIVE FINANCING

Revenue-Generating Activities (On site, ticketed events)

Recommended funding sources include:

Georgia Council for the Arts
Project-based grant funds single art projects.

National Endowment for the Arts
“Our Town” Grants support creative placemaking initiatives focused on equity and community transformation.

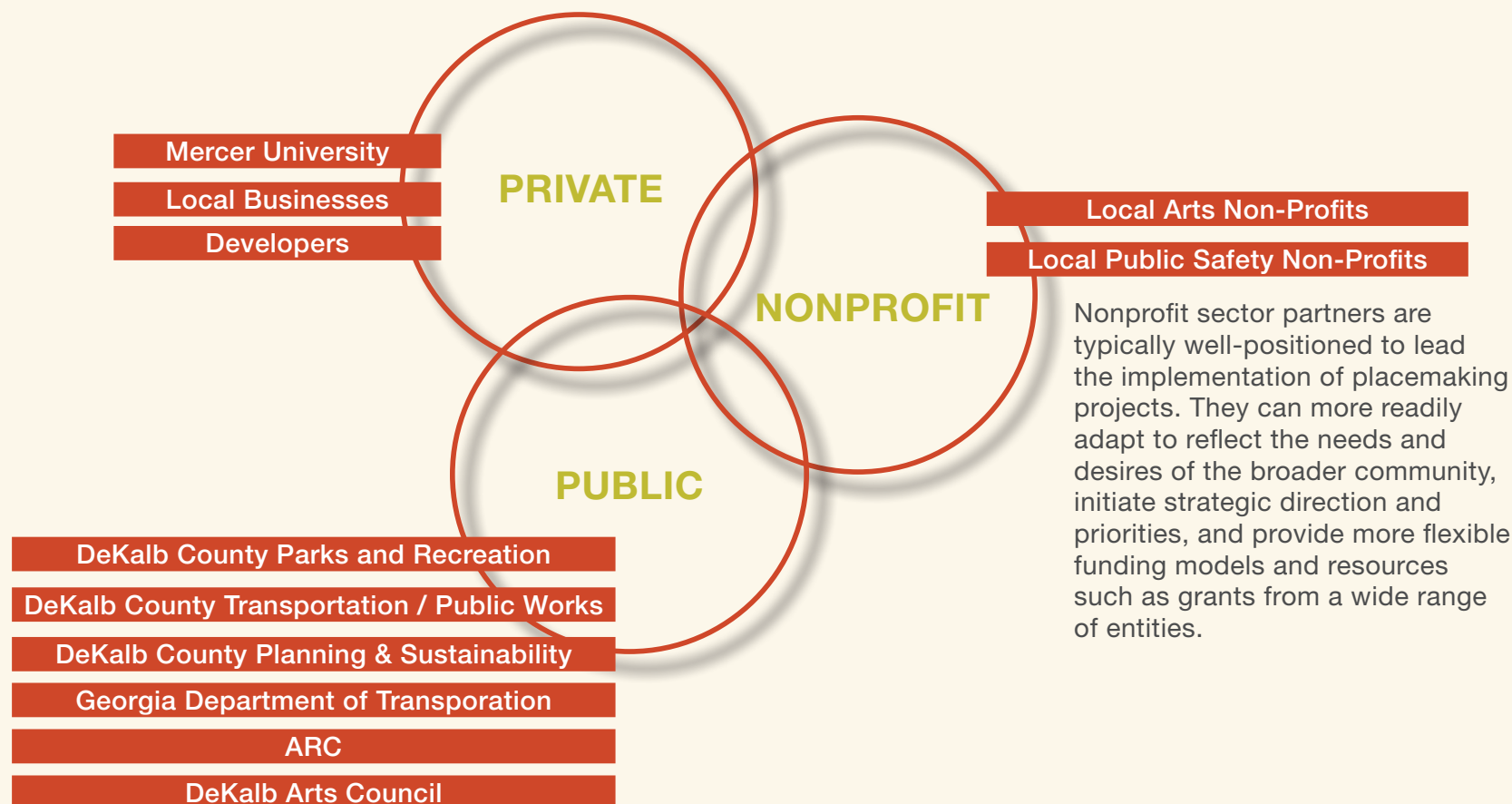
1% for the Arts Program
Allocates a percentage of capital improvement project funding for public art.

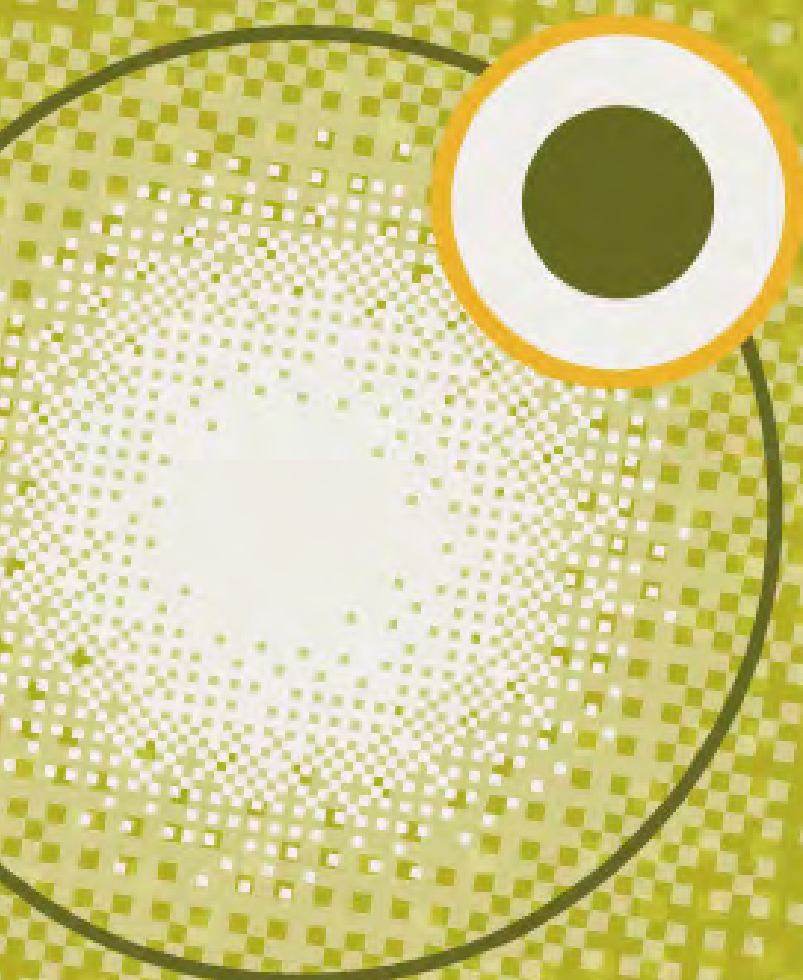
Project for Public Spaces
Community Placemaking Grants
Provides direct funding and technical assistance for transforming public spaces.

Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council (REBC) Grant Program
Offers up to \$50,000 for landscape enhancements along state routes.



Partnerships and Coordination





5.4

POLICY TOOLS, MONITORING, & NEXT STEPS

Zoning and Regulatory Actions

Implementation of this plan's vision will require targeted updates to zoning, development standards, and regulatory processes to better align land use, housing, and economic development outcomes along the corridor. Existing zoning patterns, particularly the mix of auto-oriented commercial and fragmented industrial uses, often allow development that does not support walkability, housing diversity, or long-term value creation. The following actions establish a more predictable, place-based framework that guides redevelopment, supports housing delivery, and positions the corridor for sustained investment.

1- DESIGN GUIDELINES

Establish a guide redevelopment along key segments of the corridor. The guide should:

- Define build-to zones, frontage types, and pedestrian-oriented design standards
- Regulate building placement, parking location, and streetscape interface
- Encourage mixed-use and residential development at key nodes (Embry Village, Mercer intersections)
- Integrate public art, gateway features, and corridor identity elements into development requirements
- Provide flexibility for higher-density housing in targeted areas

2- HOUSING-FOCUSED ZONING UPDATES

Align zoning to support a broader range of housing types and address identified gaps in the corridor:

- Enable missing middle housing (townhomes, duplexes, small multifamily) in proposed housing growth locations
 - An increase in Small Lot Residential Mix (RSM) Zoning can transition residential to the Regional Center and Town Center areas. RSM is currently the only zoning allowing duplexes, triplexes, and quad-plexes by right.
- Support workforce housing and attainable price points through zoning flexibility and incentives
- Allow adaptive reuse of under-performing commercial sites into residential or mixed-use development
- Encourage higher-density housing near key corridors, transit, and trail connections
- Integrate housing strategies with anti-displacement and neighborhood stabilization efforts

Zoning and Regulatory Actions, Cont.

3- TARGETED REZONING & CATALYST SITE STRATEGY

Prioritize rezoning and land assembly efforts to unlock key redevelopment opportunities:

- Transition underutilized parcels from low-value commercial/industrial uses to mixed-use and residential
- Support Catalyst redevelopment sites through coordinated zoning and infrastructure investment
- Reduce incompatible uses adjacent to residential neighborhoods

4- COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CID) STRATEGY

Explore the creation of a Presidential Parkway Community Improvement District (CID) to support long-term implementation:

- Establish a CID to provide dedicated funding for infrastructure, maintenance, and public realm improvements
- Support streetscape enhancements, branding, safety, and mobility investments
- Create a mechanism for public-private partnership and shared investment
- Position the corridor to better compete regionally for development and funding
- Coordinate CID efforts with existing regional initiatives

5- INCENTIVES & IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Align regulatory tools with funding and implementation strategies:

- Provide density bonuses or flexibility for projects that meet housing and design goals
- Leverage LCI funding, potential TADs, and SPLOST investments
- Support public-private partnerships on priority sites



Performance Metrics

To measure the success of the plan, the county should track a mix of physical change, economic growth, community impact, and implementation progress. These metrics should reflect both what gets built and how it's experienced. If initial baseline information is currently unavailable for these metrics further study or survey may be needed.

1. Development & Land Use Change # Number of catalyst sites implemented (especially top 3 priority sites) - AC Acres of underutilized land redeveloped - SF Amount of new mixed-use or infill development % Change in property values within target areas - X/X Ratio of redevelopment vs. greenfield development 2. Economic Activity # New businesses opened (especially local/small businesses) % Retail occupancy rates in key corridors (e.g., Embry Village, Mercer) # Job creation within the district \$ Increase in local tax revenue (sales + property tax) % Commercial vacancy rate reduction 3. Housing Outcomes # Number of new housing units by type (infill, highway corridor, etc.) % Percentage of preserved existing housing stock - X/X Housing affordability levels (rent/income ratio) # Number of displacement mitigation or preservation programs implemented	4. Mobility & Access - MI Miles of new trails, sidewalks, and bike infrastructure # Number of trailheads added at key intersections # Pedestrian and cyclist counts in improved corridors % Reduction in traffic incidents or improved safety metrics % Transit ridership changes (if applicable) 5. Parks & Public Space - AC Acres of new park space created # Number of shared-use agreements established (schools + parks) % Park usage rates (visitation, programming participation) % Access: % of residents within a 10-minute walk to a park 6. Community & Cultural Impact # Number of public art installations or cultural programs # Participation in community events, pop-ups, and workshops % Resident satisfaction (survey-based) % Diversity of community partners engaged (artists, orgs, etc.) % Perception of neighborhood identity/branding
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Track metrics on a yearly basis to ensure that the plan progress. Analyze and evaluate cumulative progress at 5 years to inform further actions.

Performance Metrics, Cont.

7. Implementation Progress

% % of recommendations completed vs. planned

X/X Public vs. private investment leveraged

YRS Time to implementation for catalyst projects

\$ Grants or funding secured

8. Branding & Identity

Installation of gateways and wayfinding elements

Increase in visitors to the district

Social media/marketing engagement tied to the area

Recognition as a destination (events, regional draw)

LIST OF ACRONYMS

FUNDING PROGRAMS & SOURCES

ARC – Atlanta Regional Commission

ARPA – American Rescue Plan Act

CDBG – Community Development Block Grant (HUD)

CIP – Capital Improvement Program

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

GDOT – Georgia Department of Transportation

HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HUD)

HSIP – Highway Safety Improvement Program

HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

LCI – Livable Centers Initiative (ARC)

LMIG – Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (GDOT)

NEA – National Endowment for the Arts

SPLOST – Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax

SS4A – Safe Streets and Roads for All (USDOT)

TAP – Transportation Alternatives Program

WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

ORGANIZATIONS & PARTNERS

ARC Workforce – ARC Workforce Development Programs

CLT – Community Land Trust

MARTA – Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

P3 / Public-Private Partnerships – Joint public and private investment projects