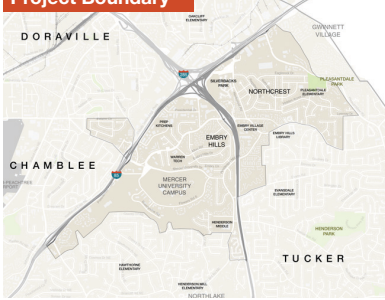


Embry Hills- Presidential Parkway & Surrounding Communities Placemaking Strategy

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)

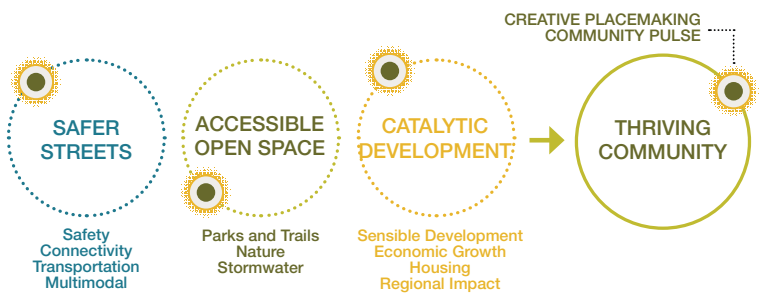
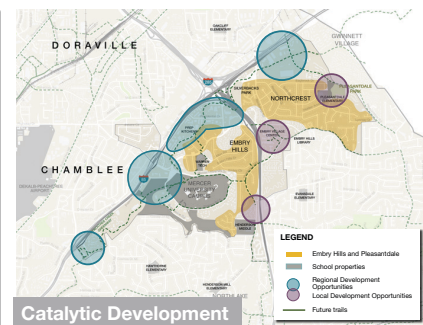
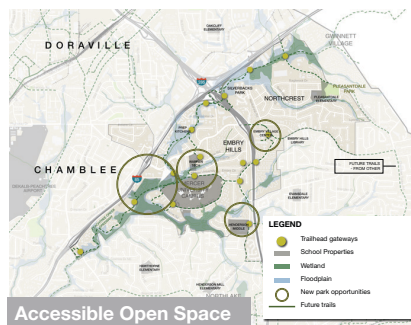
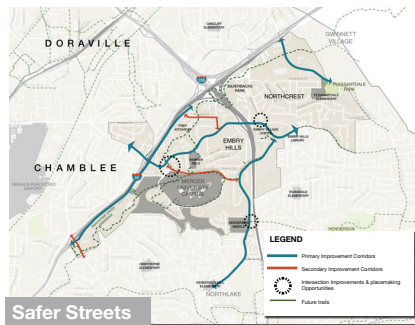


1- Listening & Discovery

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

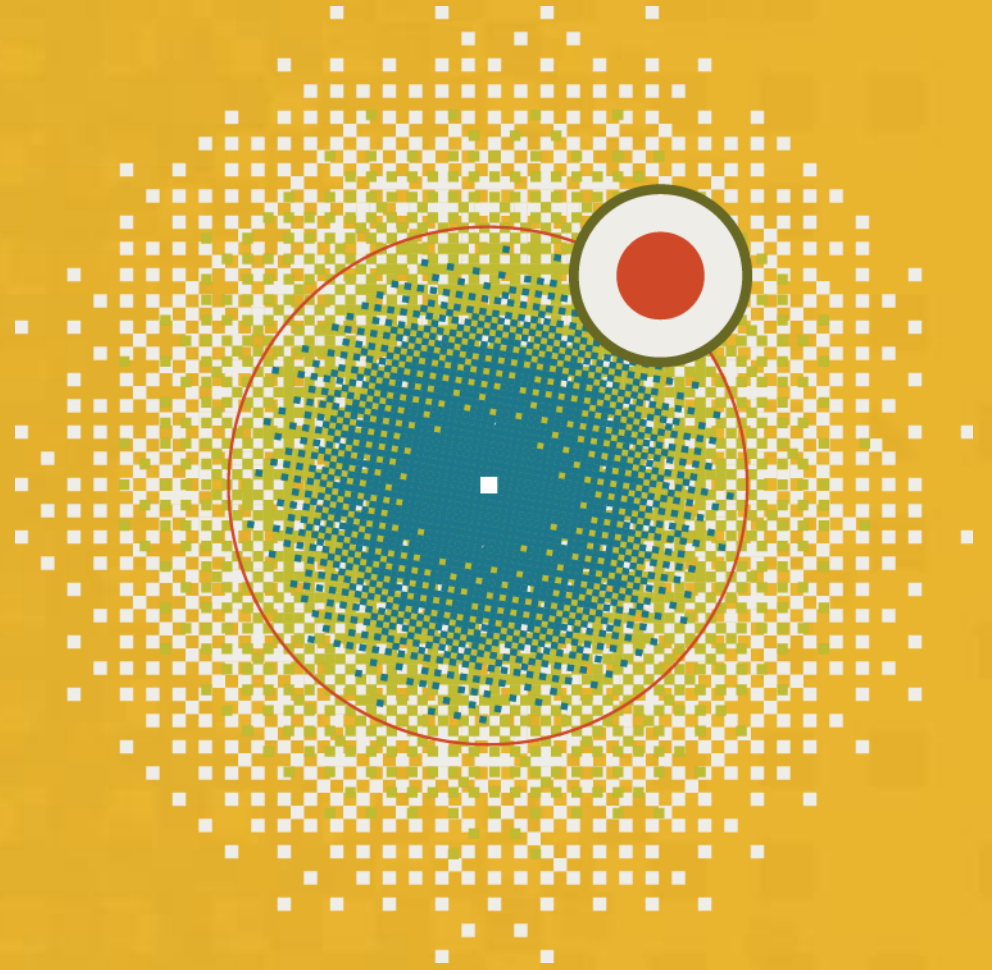
Strategies for accomplishing the framework, from phasing, project timelines, and partnerships needed were established. Performance metrics can help track the implementation and the impact on the community as the plan becomes a reality.



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.



PROJECT TIMELINE

November



1

Existing Conditions & Technical Analysis

Physical Conditions & Analysis
Past Plan Review
Needs and Opportunities

December – March



2

Plan Development

Landuse and Zoning Strategy
Transportation and Mobility Strategy
Placemaking Strategy
Catalytic Development

April- May



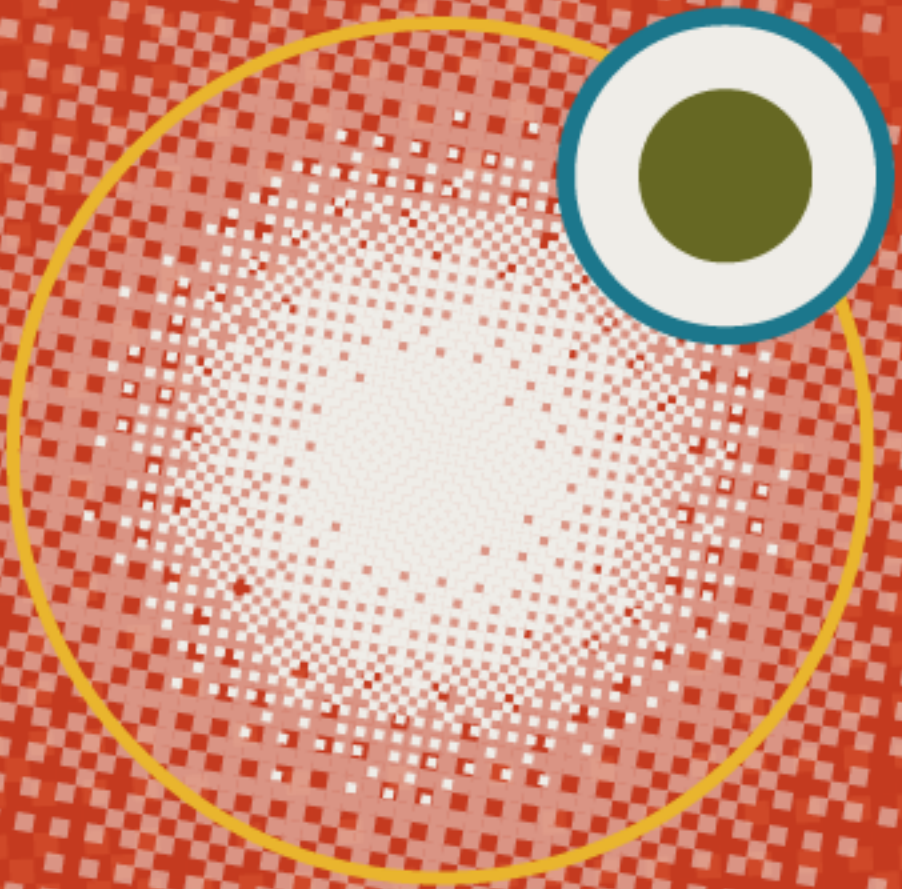
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Project Deliverables

Implementation Plan
Draft & Final Report



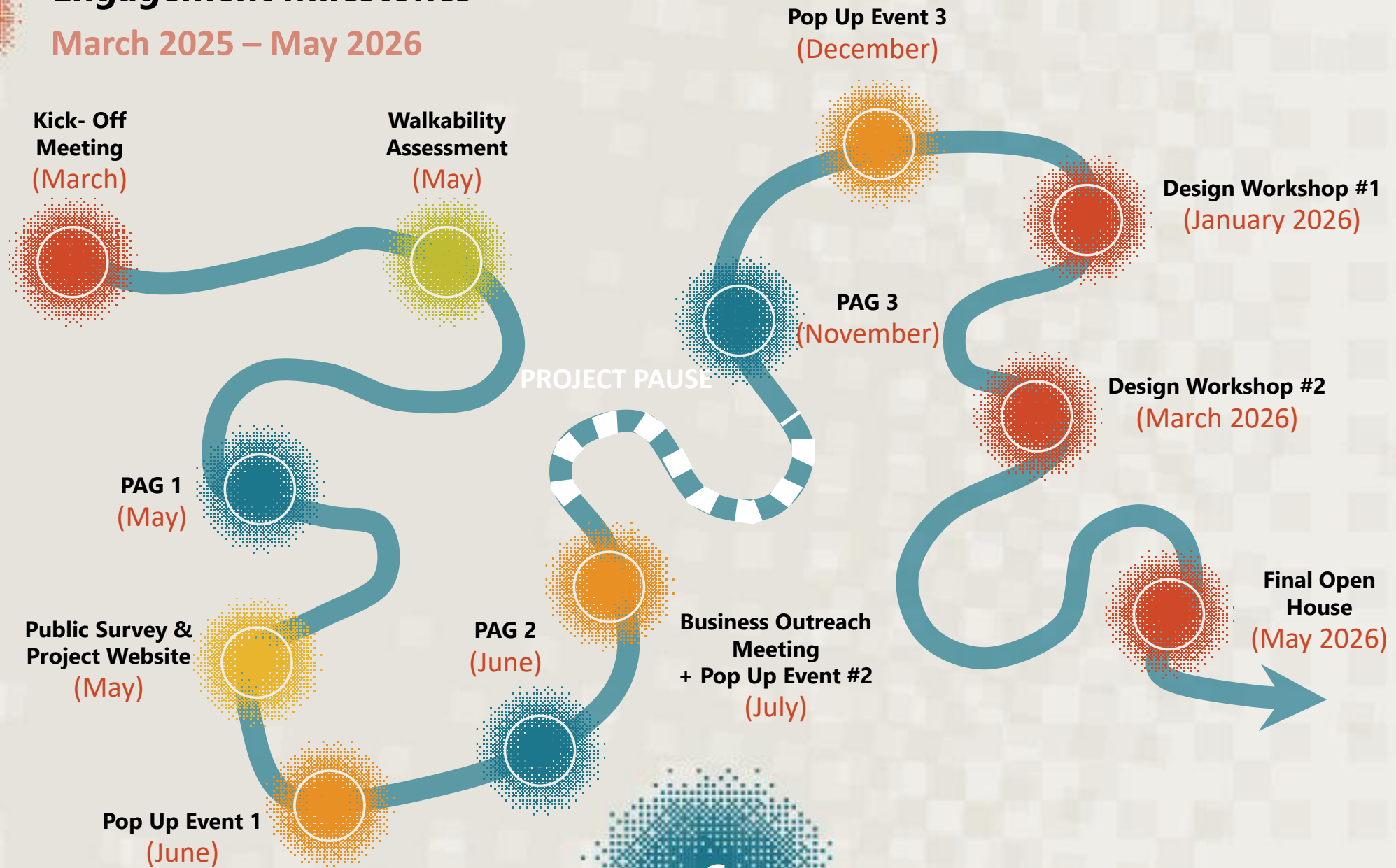
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Engagement Summary

Engagement Milestones

March 2025 – May 2026



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

180+ survey responses

10 engagement events

2,250+ total community members reached so far

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

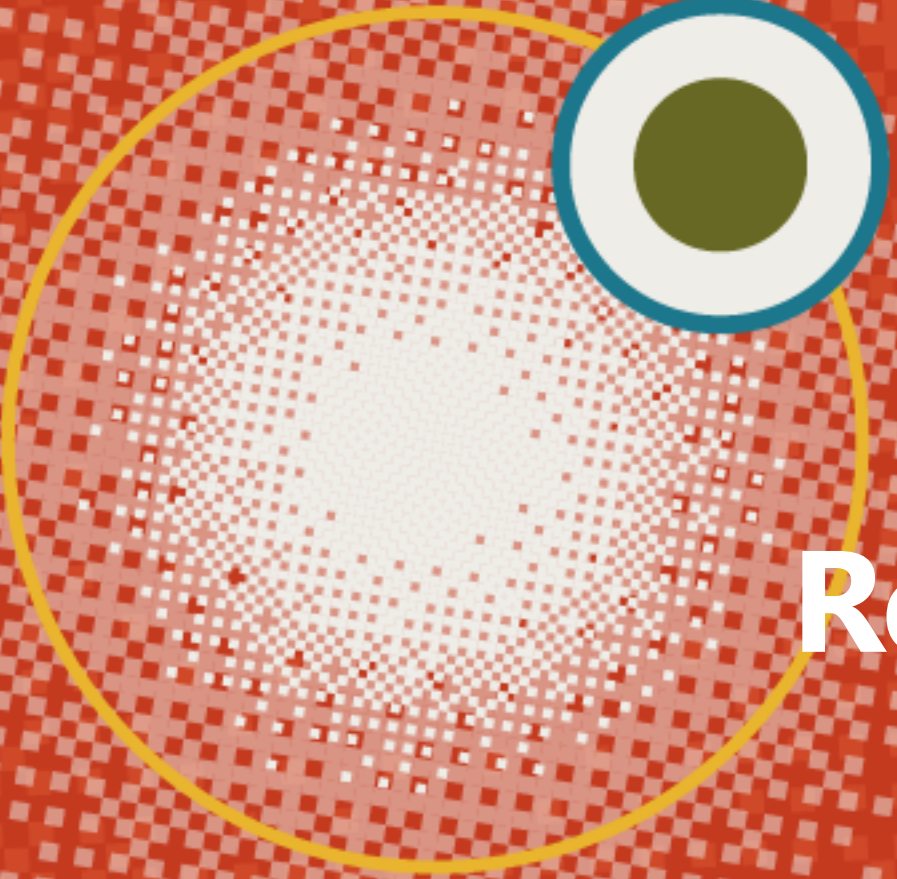
Create a cohesive identity for the district

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

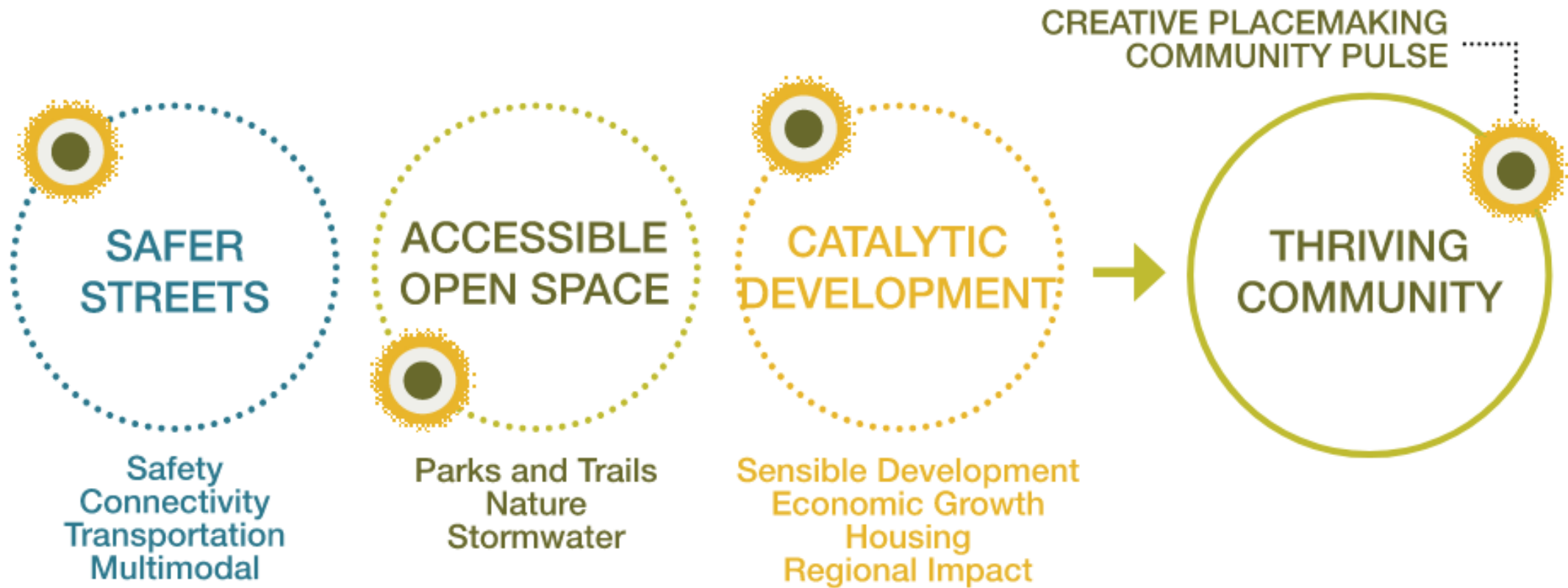
Currently disconnected: Needs wider and more connected sidewalks



Key Recommendations

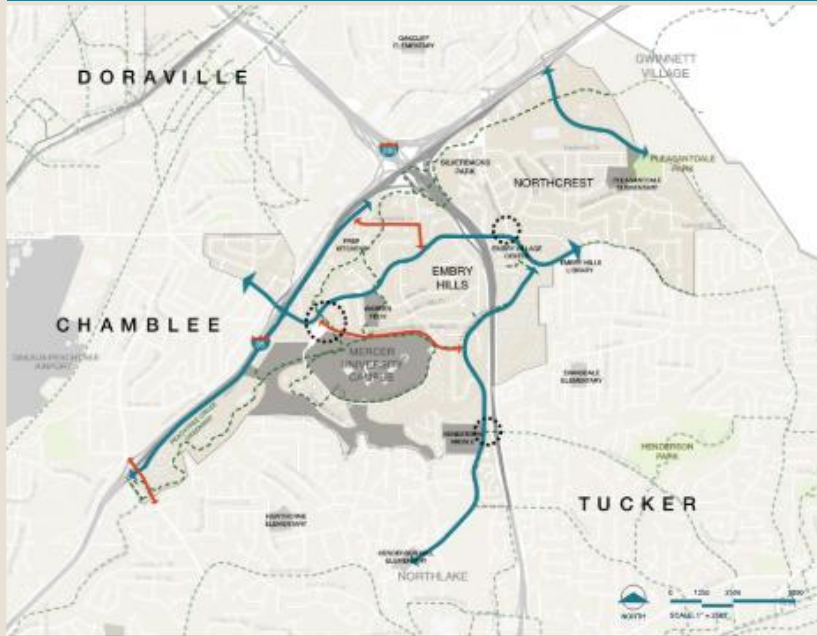


Project Framework



Overall Recommendations

SAFER STREETS

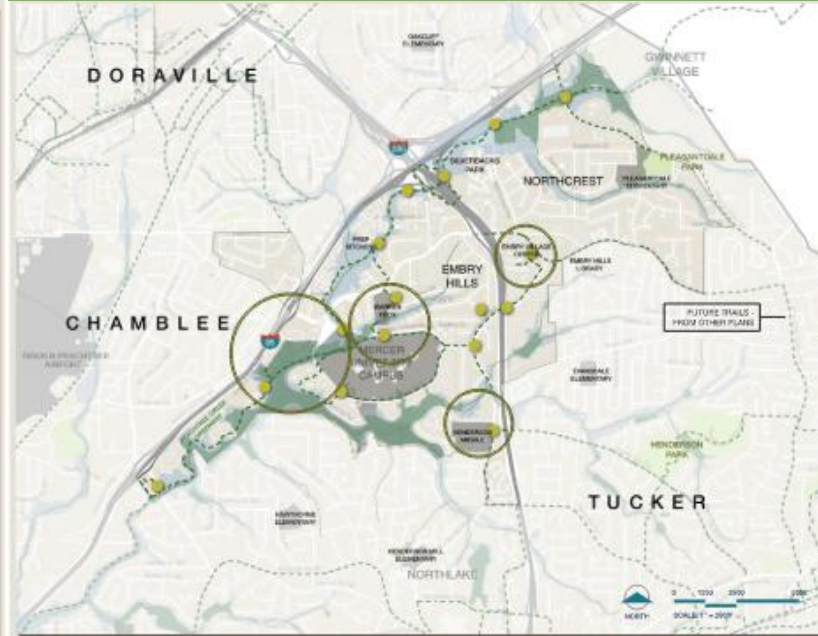


Strategies

- 1 Primary Corridor Opportunities
- 2 Pedestrian Enhancements Opportunities
- 3 Key Intersection Safety Needs



ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE

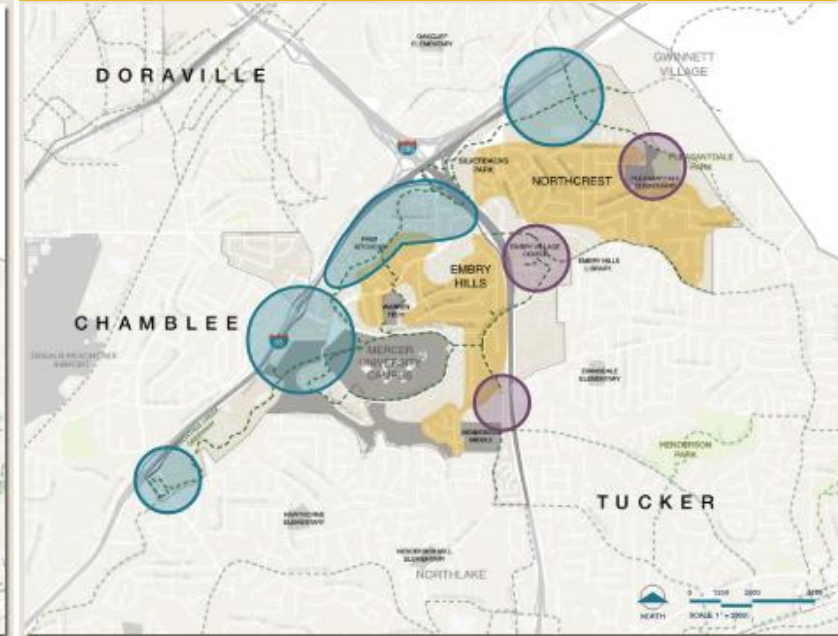


Strategies

- 1 Areas to Preserve
- 2 New Park Opportunities
- 3 Trailhead Gateway Opportunities



CATALYTIC DEVELOPMENT



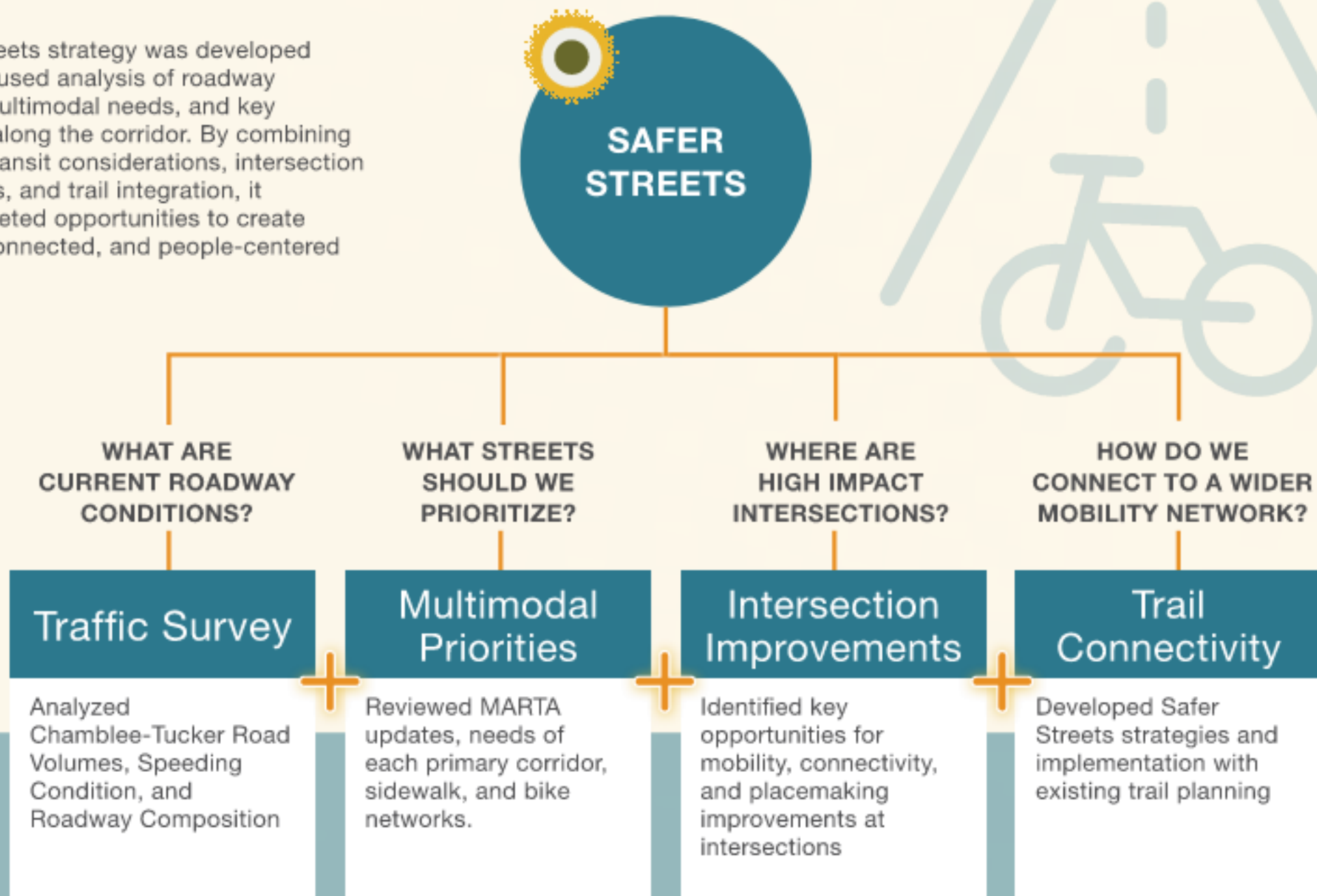
Strategies

- 1 Regional Development Opportunities
- 2 Local Development Opportunities
- 3 Neighborhood Priorities



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



Pedestrian Enhancement Opportunities - Strategy 2

FIGURE 30 - SECONDARY STREETScape IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

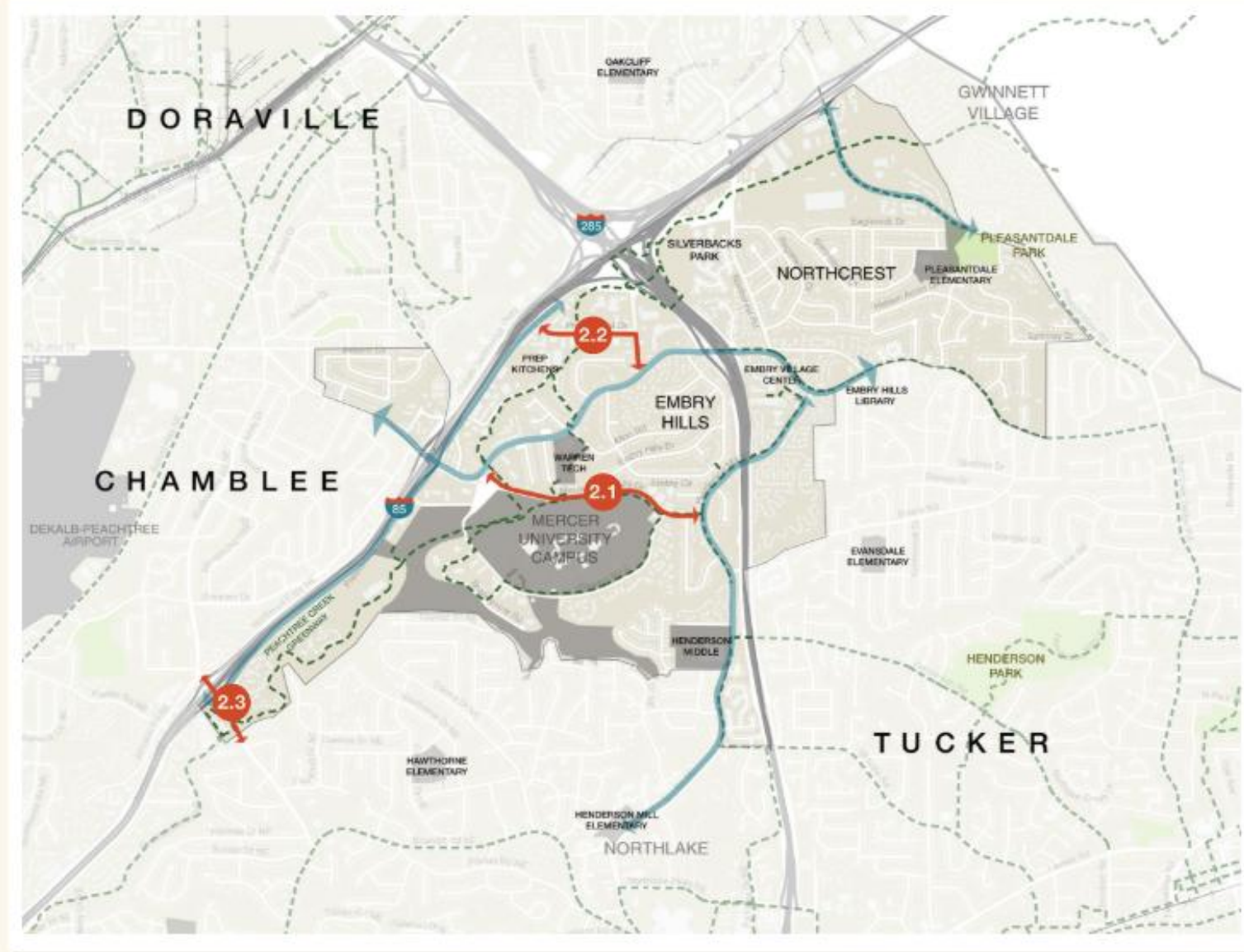
The pedestrian enhancement opportunities illustrate three primary roads that need pedestrian enhancements. Below is a list of elements that should be added to better connect the community.

- 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



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.

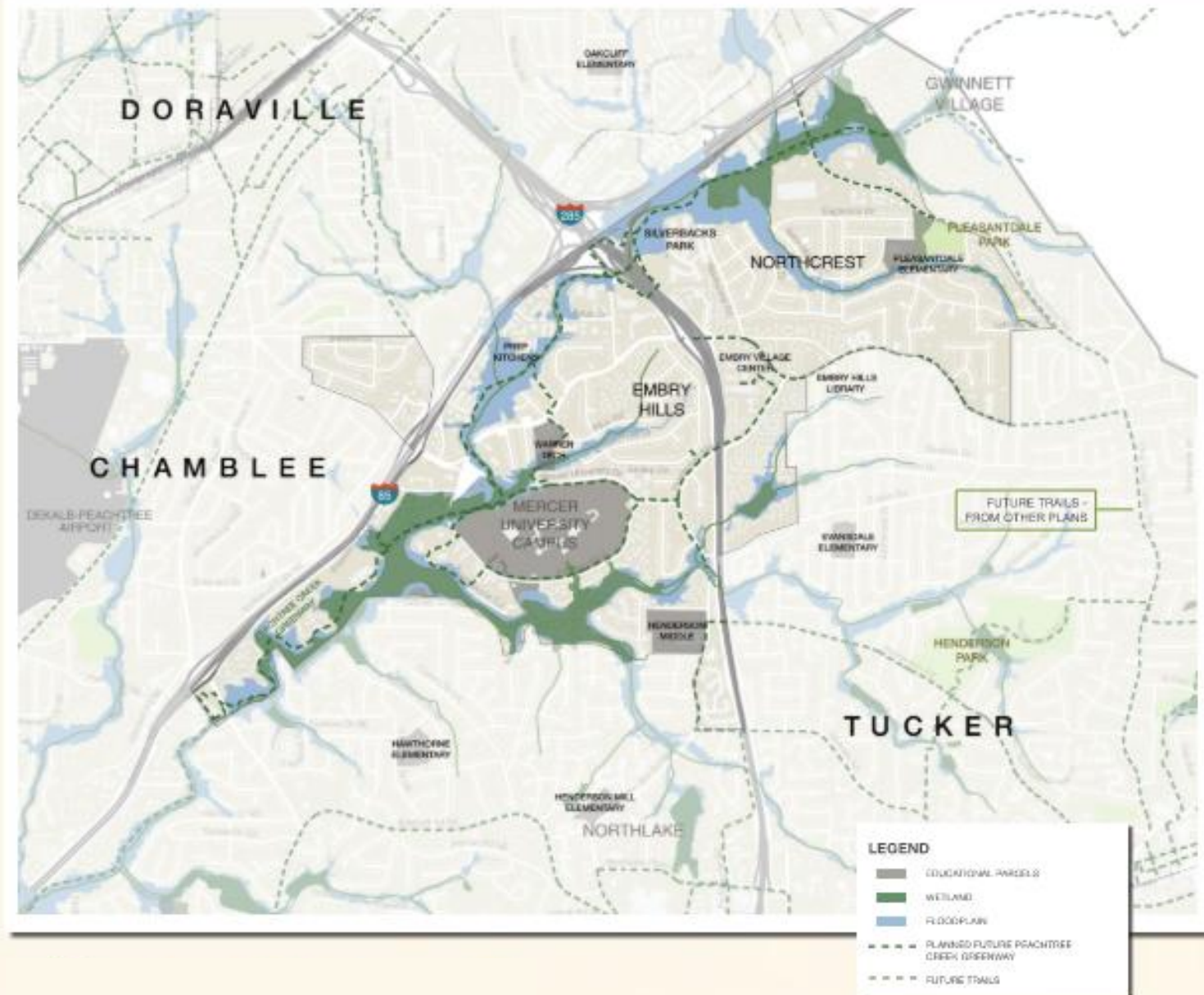
Areas to Preserve - Strategy 1

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.



New Park Opportunities - Strategy 2

FIGURE 34 - NEW PARK STRATEGY

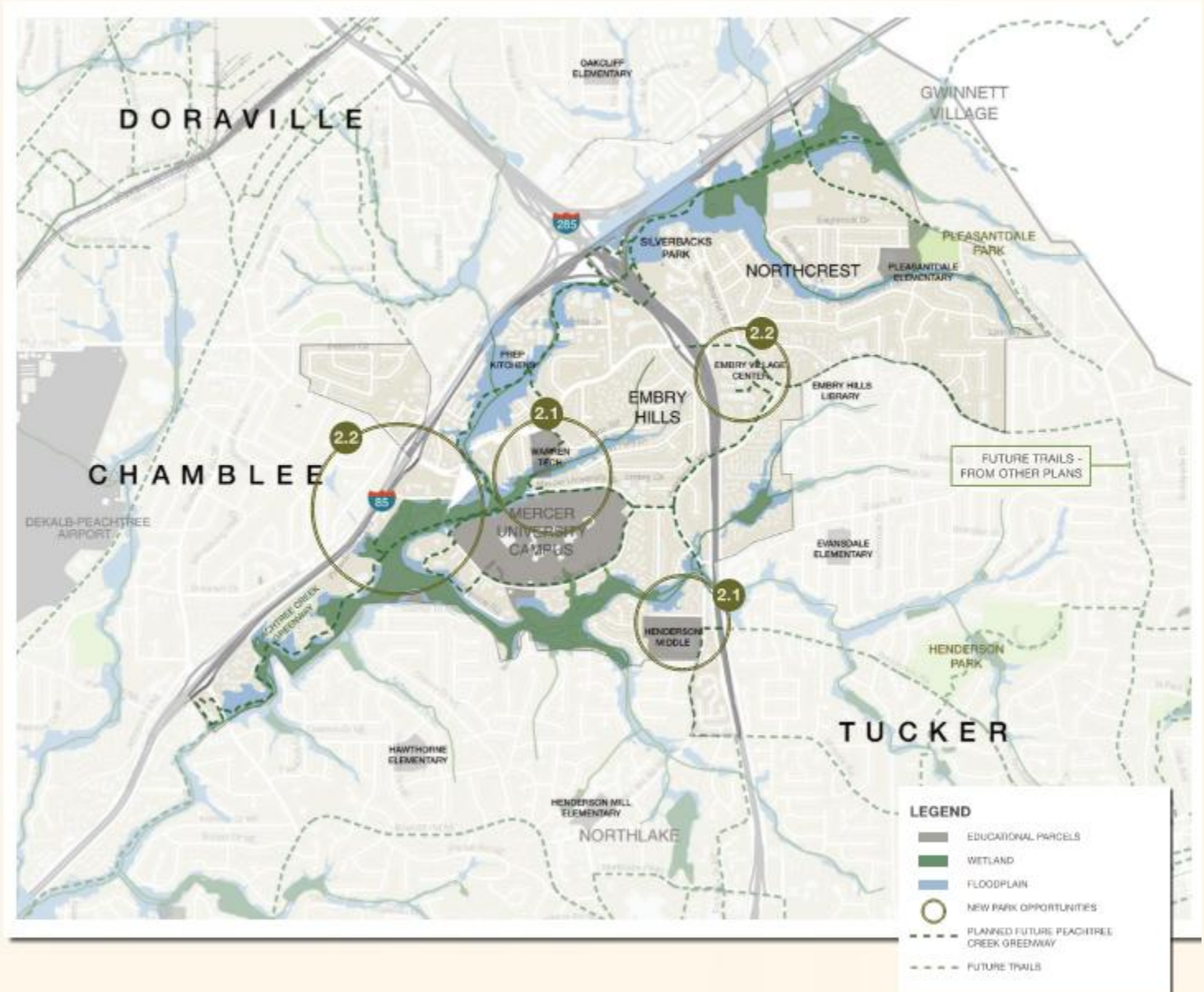
The New Park Opportunities strategy focuses on expanding access to open space by introducing two new parks in underutilized areas and establishing shared use agreements with local schools. Together, these efforts address gaps in neighborhood park access while maximizing existing resources to provide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



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.

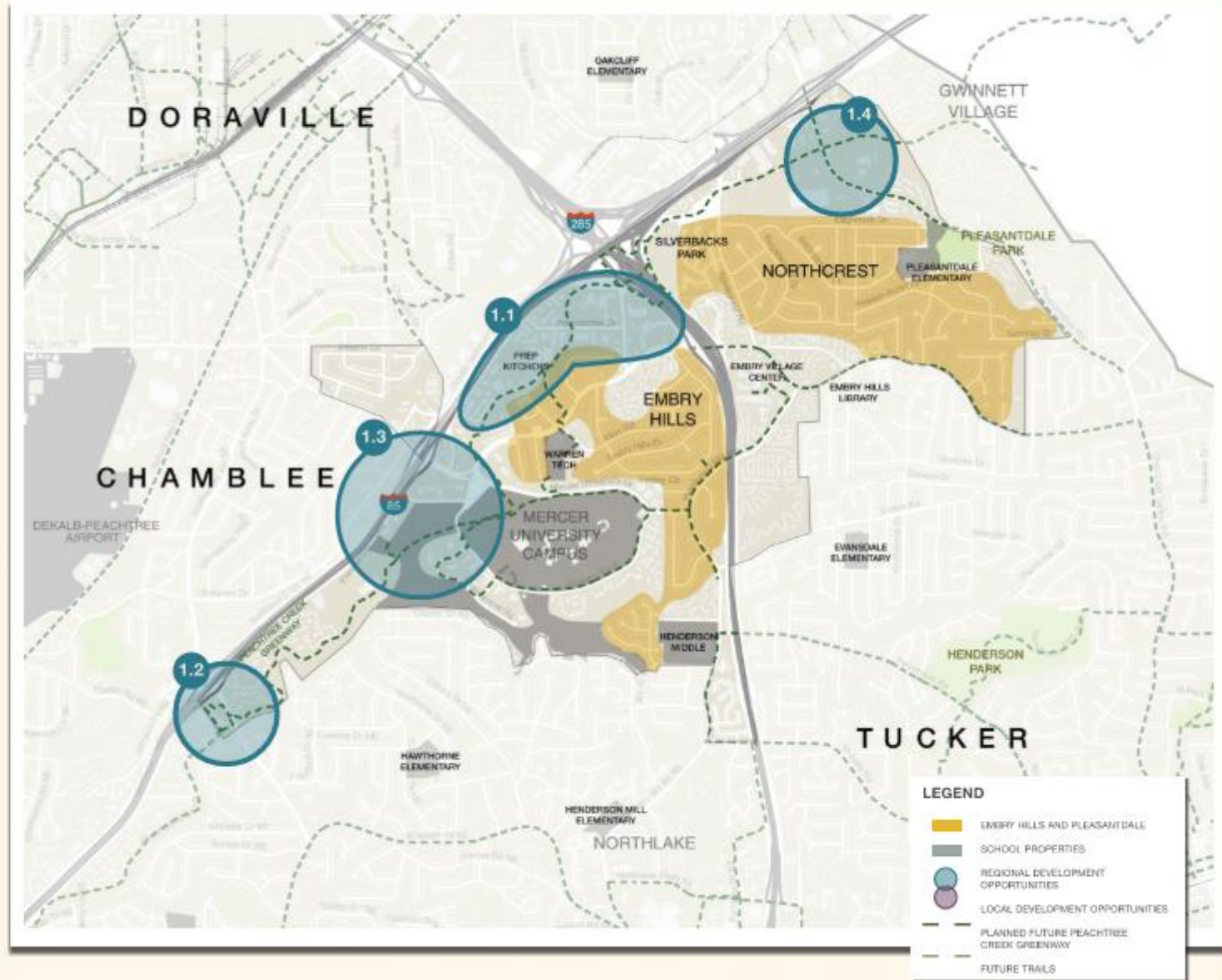
1.3 MERCER ENTRY NODE

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



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.

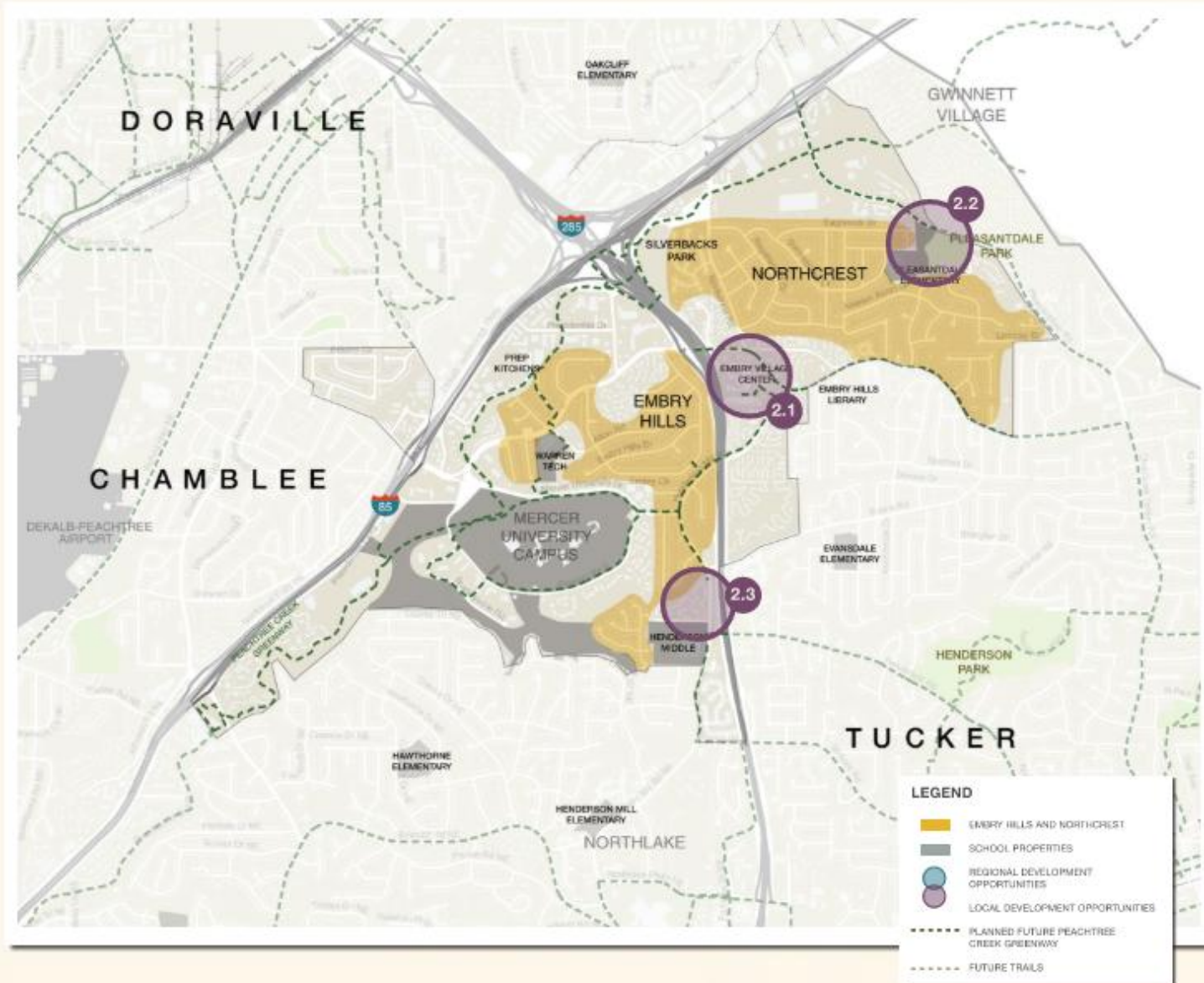
2.2 PLEASANTDALE PARK

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

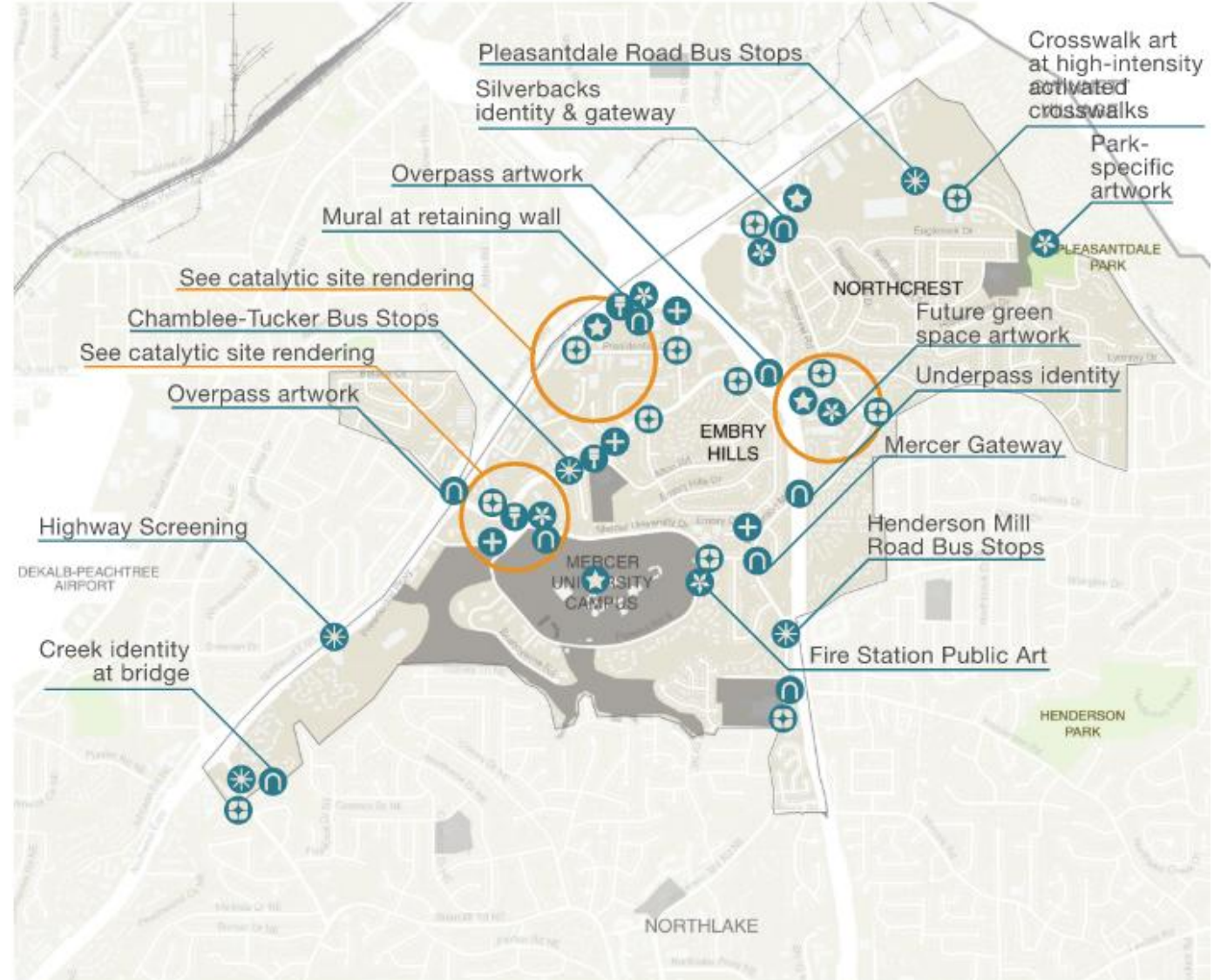
Along key connective intersections this intersection links Embry Hills, local schools, and the Northlake community improvement district (CID). This small commercial center located just off the highway is characterized by limited connectivity and a pattern of small, narrow parcels. Strategic opportunities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

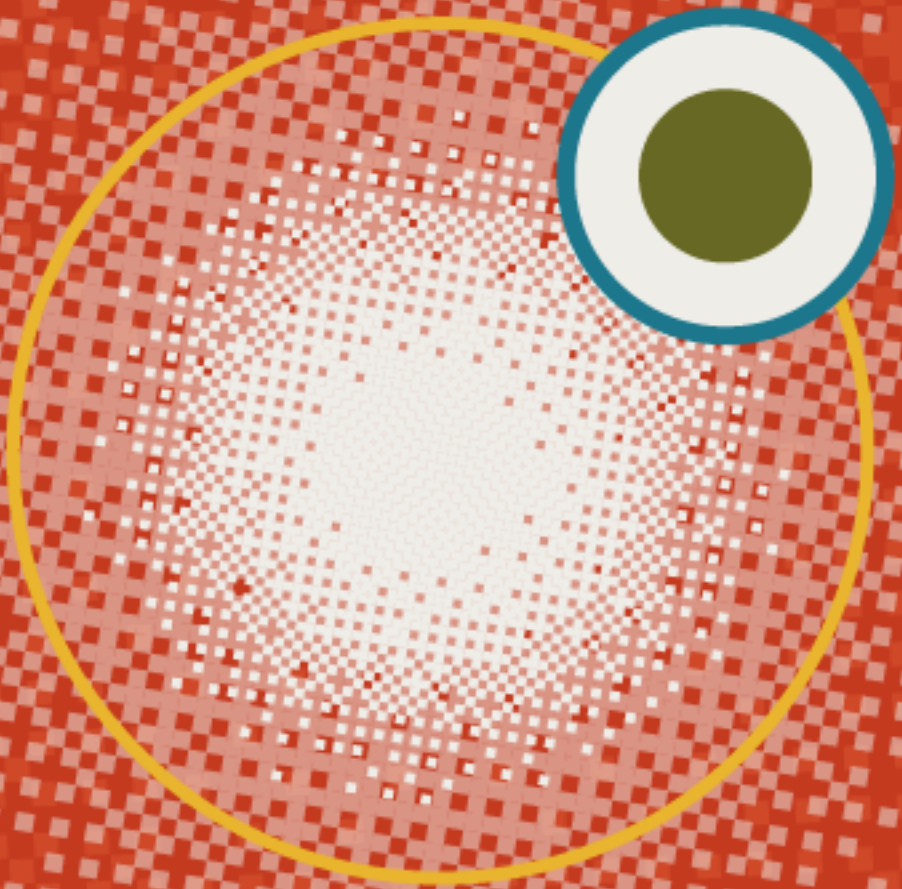
FIGURE 37 - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



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 Sites

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.

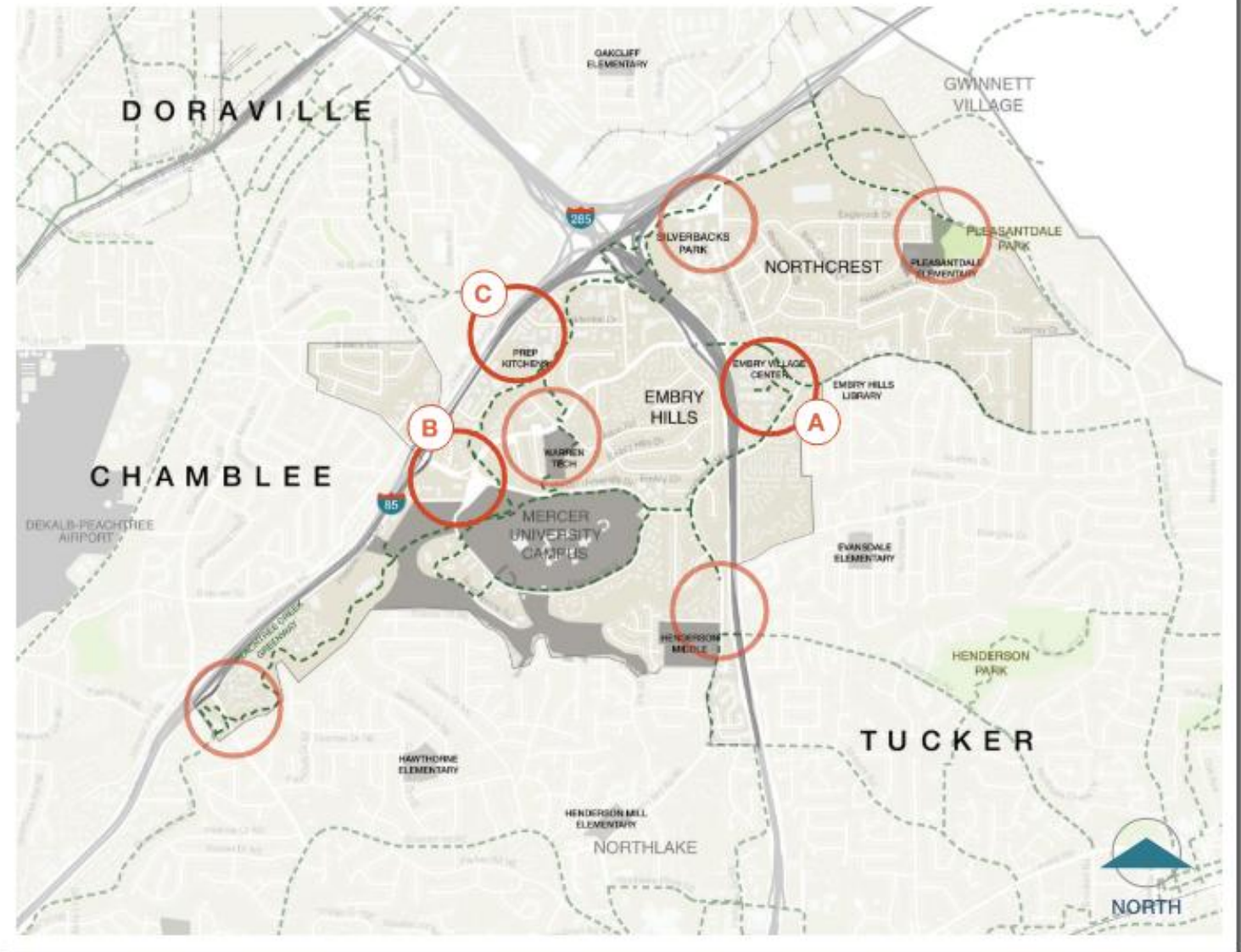
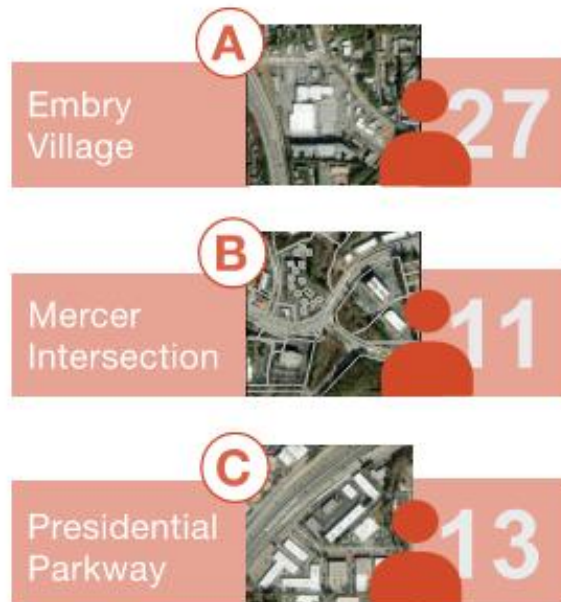


FIGURE 62 - CATALYST SITE VOTING MAP

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.

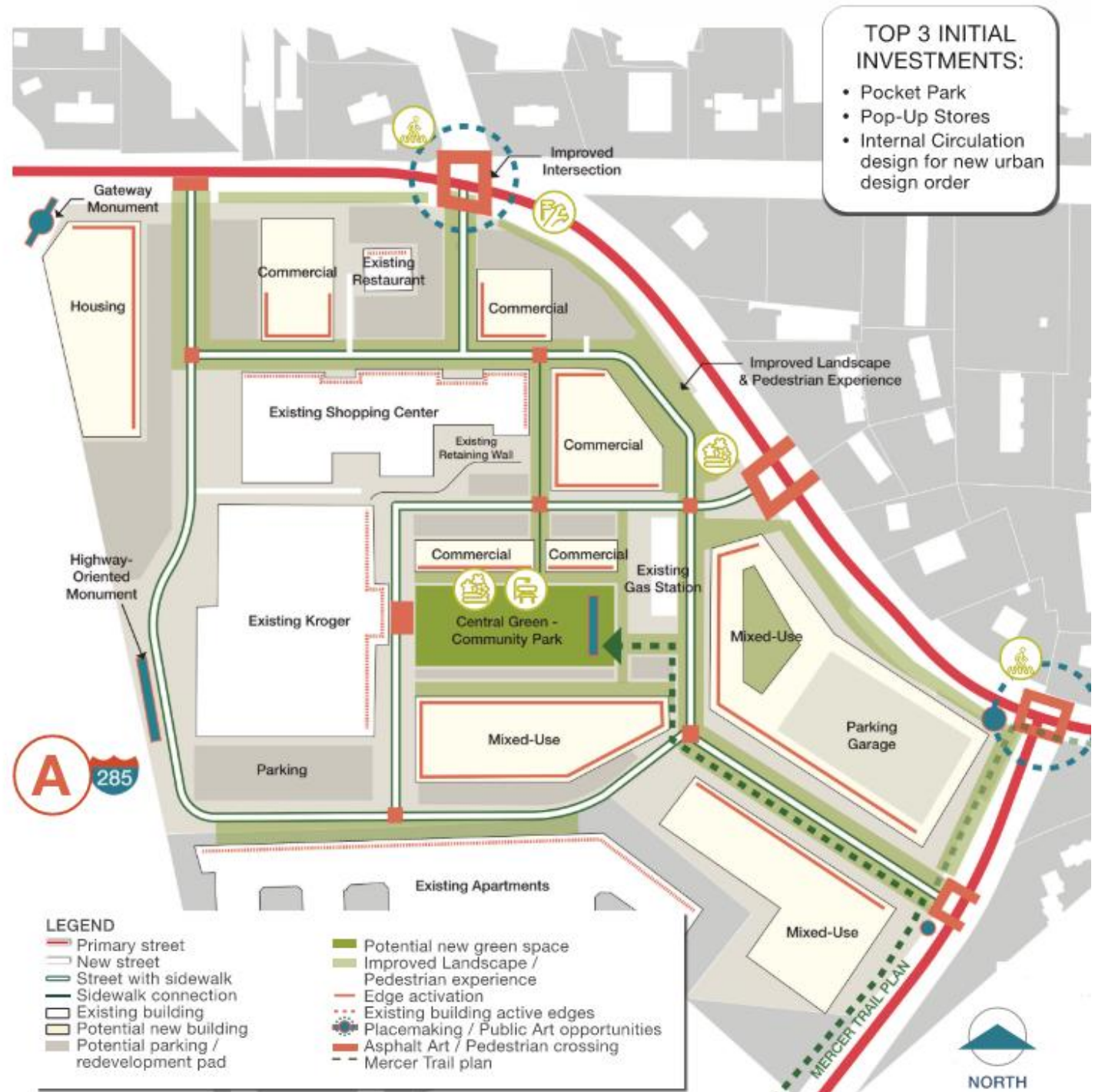




FIGURE 63 - EMBRY VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER CATALYST SITE RENDERING

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



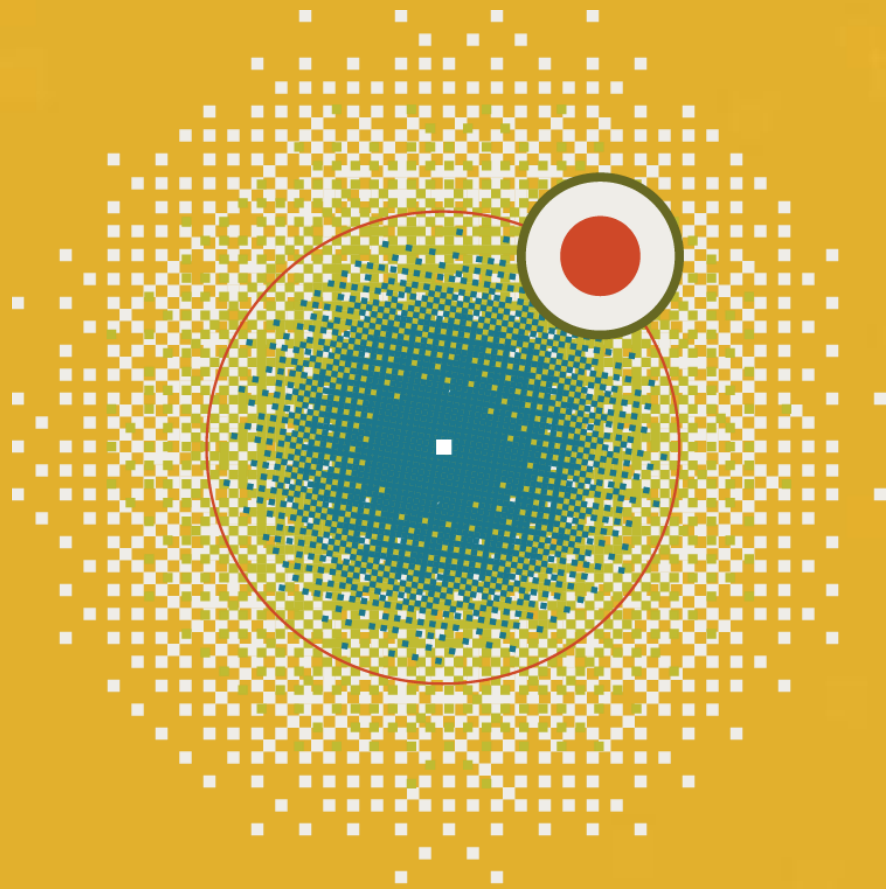
FIGURE 68 - CATALYST SITE C - PRESIDENTIAL PARKWAY





BEFORE





THANK YOU!