



# Mercer University Trail Study

Public Meeting #3 – November 2, 2023



# Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Planning Process
3. Summary of Feedback to Date
4. Possible Trail Opportunities
5. Possible Trail Segments
6. Next Steps
7. Q&A

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**Welcome**

# Meeting Structure

- Please sign in
- We will use Pigeonhole to gather your input and to manage questions
- We will answer as many questions as we can live tonight
- Please send additional thoughts to the email address at the end of the presentation

This presentation will be available for viewing at:

[dekalbcountyga.gov/parks/programs-and-events](https://dekalbcountyga.gov/parks/programs-and-events)

# Study led by PATH Foundation



**Eric Ganther**  
Transportation  
Planner



**Pete Pellegrini**  
Project/ Construction  
Manager



**Greta deMayo**  
Executive Director



**Andie Eller**  
Landscape Architectural  
Designer



**Macy Khamsa**  
Landscape Architectural  
Designer



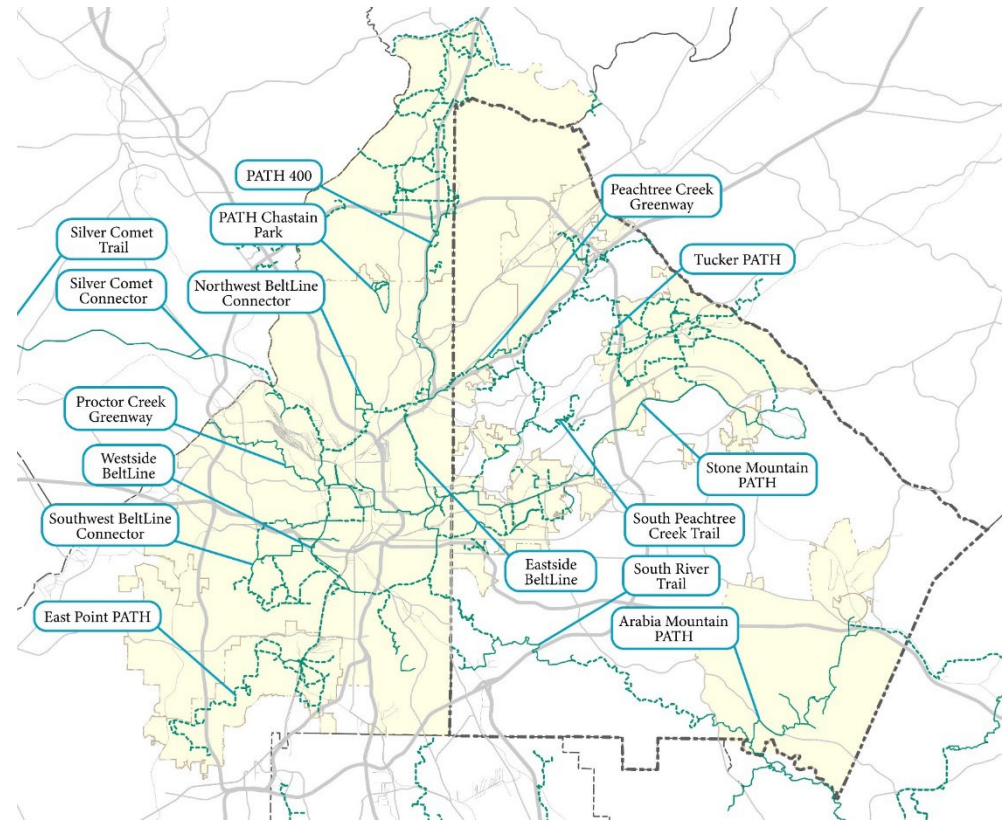
**Nico Shen**  
Landscape Architect

Partners:



# What is the PATH Foundation?

- Plans, designs and builds trails for many communities
- 320+ miles of trails built to date
- Raised \$65M private to match \$255M public



**PATH Trails in DeKalb County and City of Atlanta**

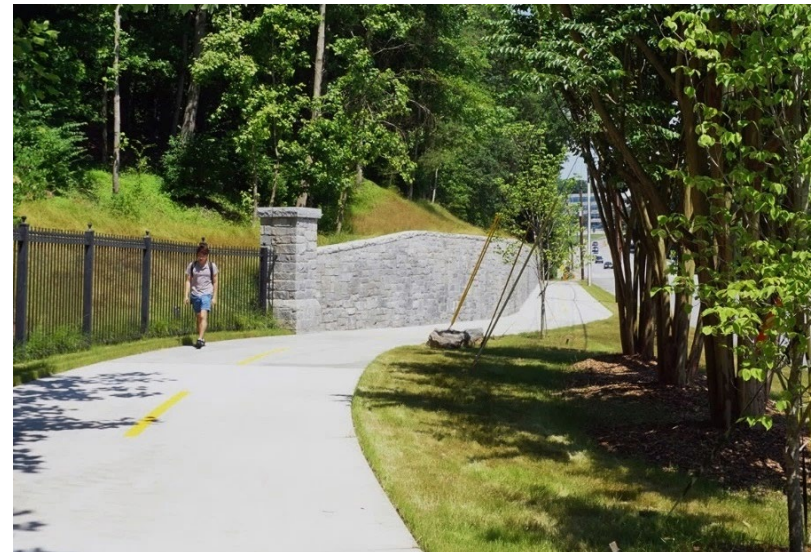
# What are Greenways?



- Linear parks designed for pedestrians, bicyclists and wheelchair users
- Completely separated from vehicular traffic
- Provides a **highly attractive** and safe trail user experience

# What are Sidepaths?

- Roadway-adjacent facility designed for pedestrians, bicyclists and wheelchair users
- Separated from traffic except at vehicle crossings
- Provides a safe and attractive trail user experience





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**Planning Process**

# Measurable Goals of the Trail Study

- Partner with community to propose a high-quality trail for District 1
- Reconnect neighborhoods separated by interstates
- Enable alternative transportation options to key destinations and to the future regional trail network

## **Desired Outcomes of the Project**

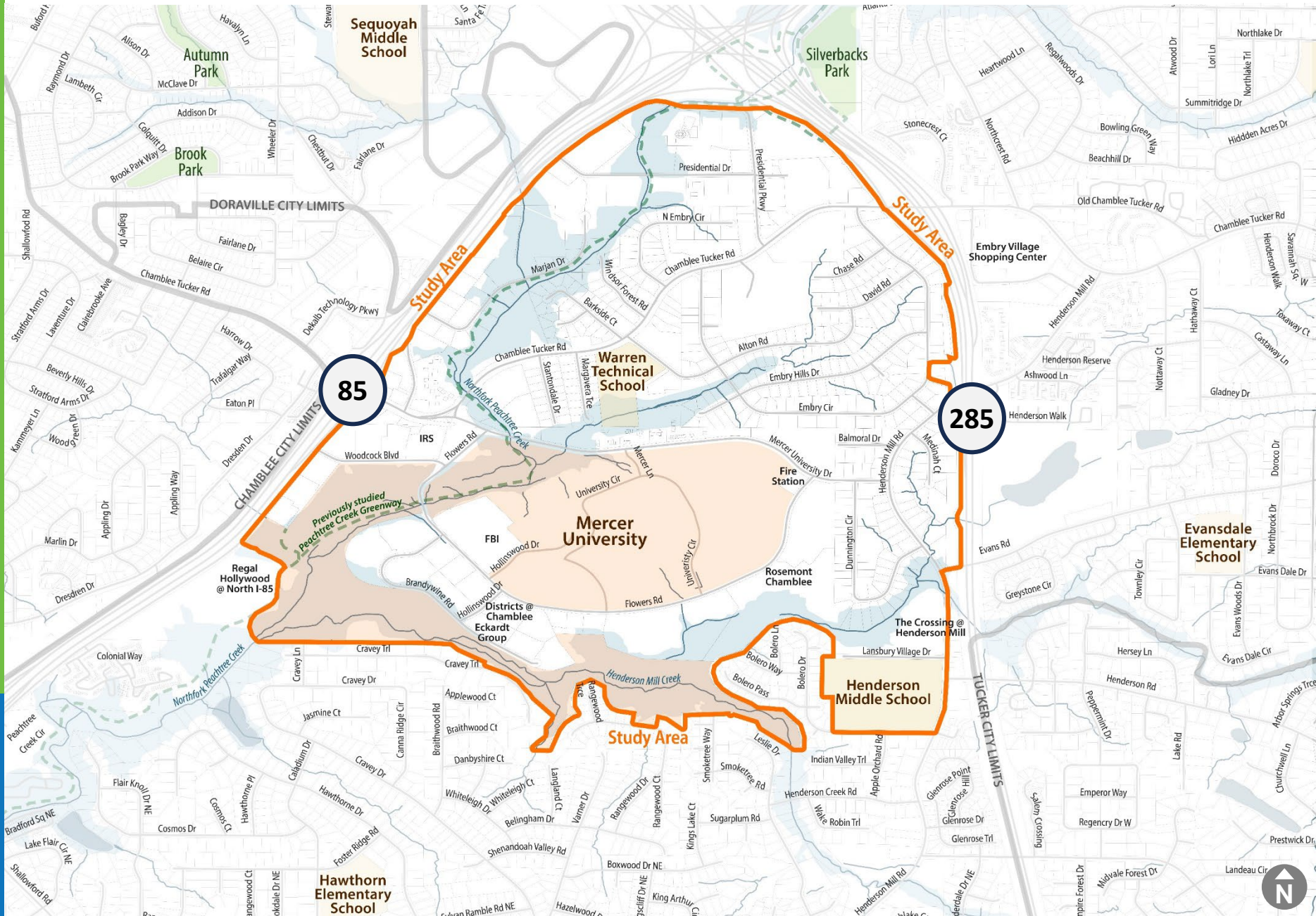
- Provide neighbors access to the unique ecological areas of Mercer's campus.
- Enhance physical, mental, and social health through outdoor recreation
- Empower people with mobility challenges to enjoy the benefits of trails and natural areas
- Educate residents, workers, and students of all ages about their environment
- Identify and address the privacy and security of residents who live near trails

# Feedback Channels

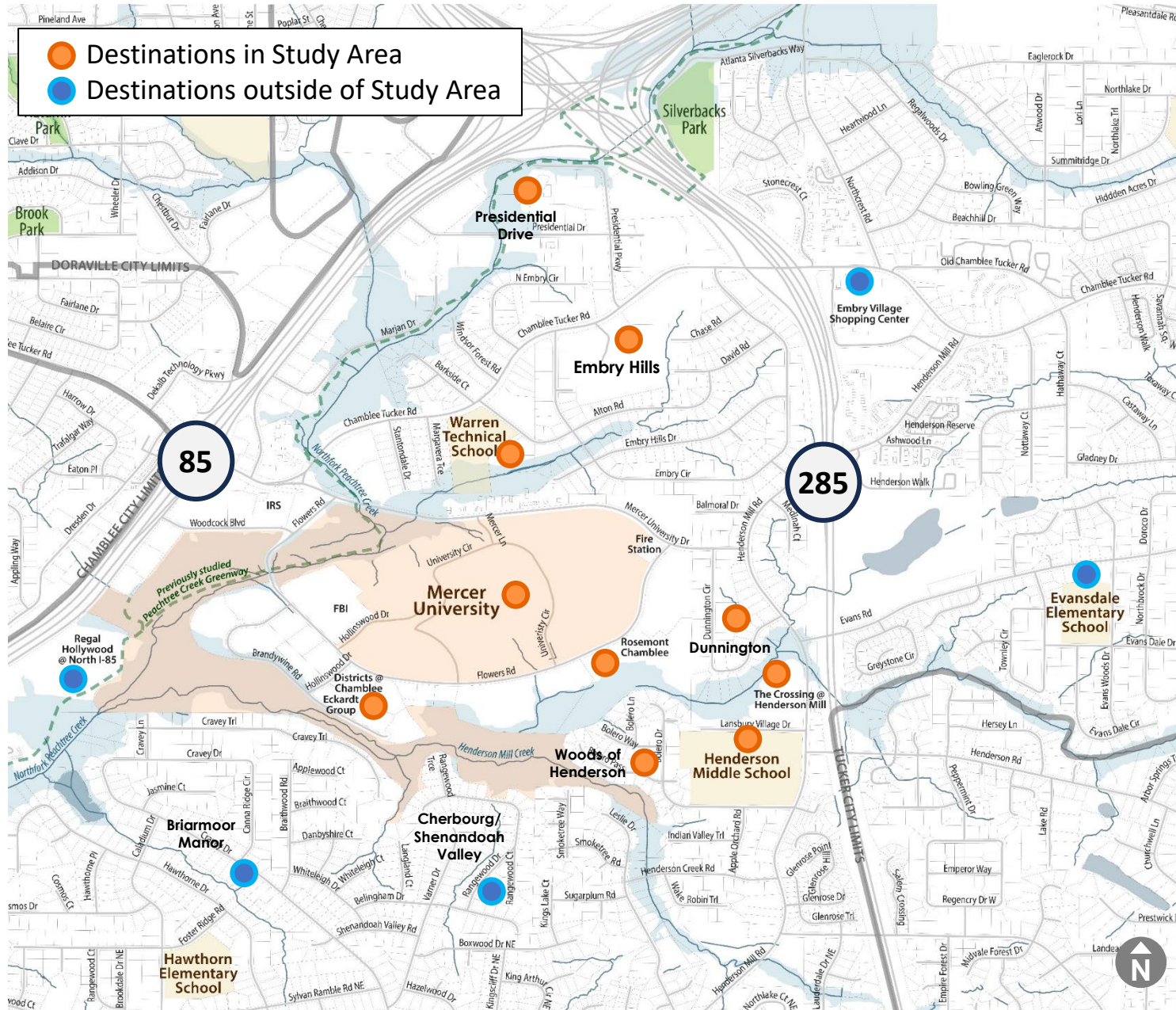
- Public information open house (Meeting #1: Aug. 24, 2023)
- Information boards
- Online survey
- Peachtree Creek Greenway walk and Mason Mill walk
- Public presentation (Meeting #2: Sept. 27, 2023)
- Question cards and comment cards from meeting
- Emails sent to DeKalb County (Commissioner, RPCA)
- Emails to working group members



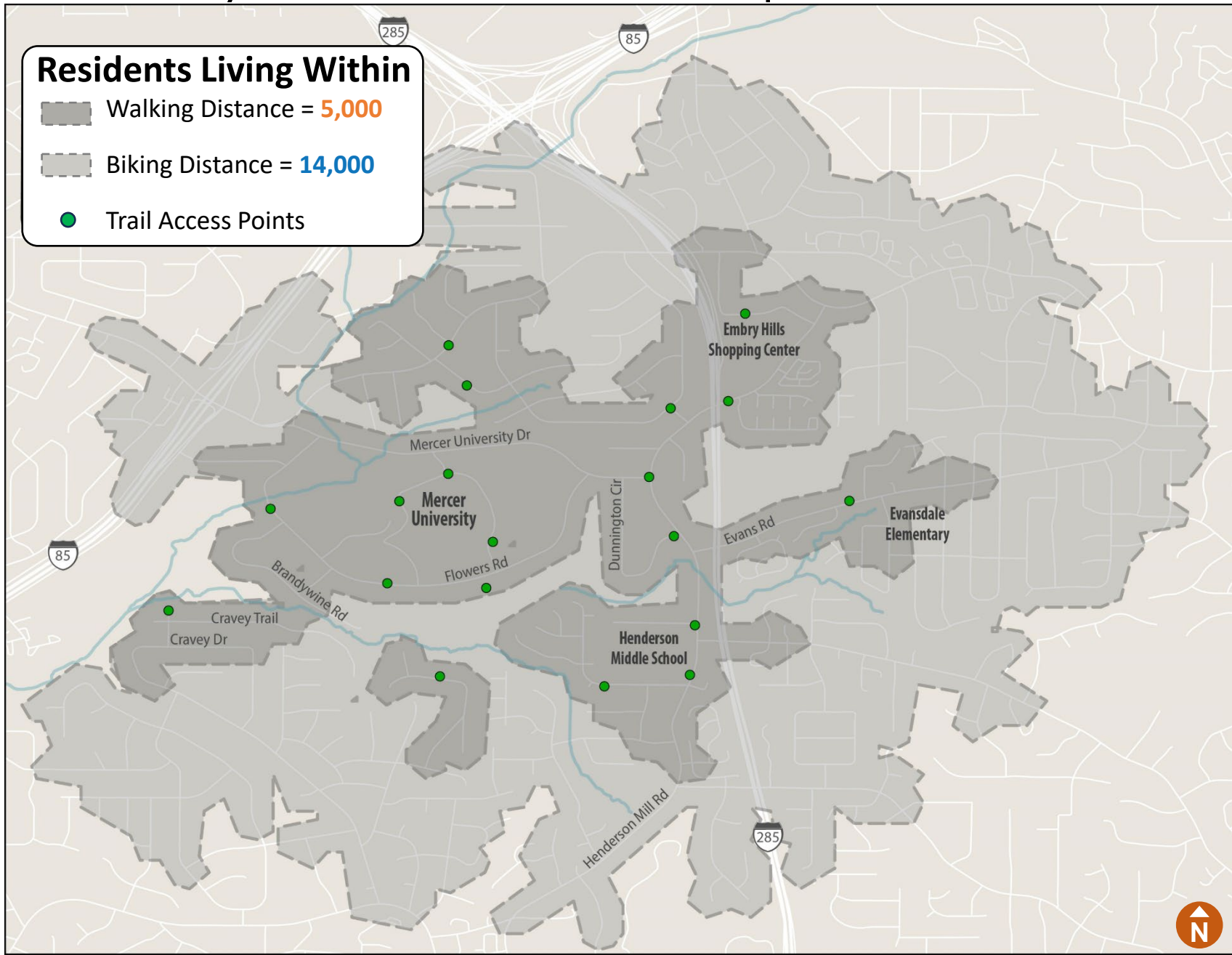
# Mercer University Trail Study



# Trail Study Area - Key Destinations



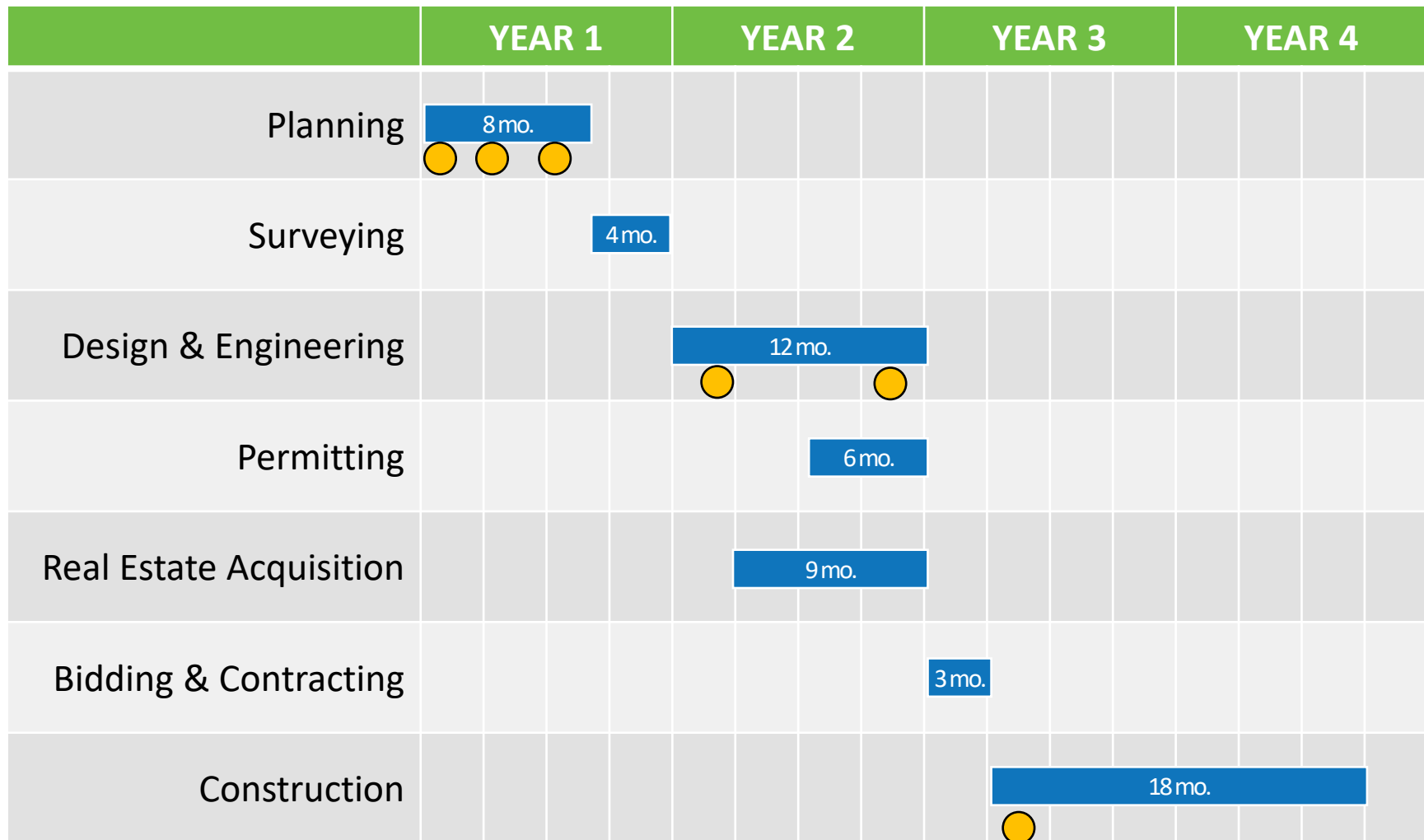
# How Many Could Access Proposed Trails?



# Mercer Urban Forest and Trails



# How Trails Happen



● Public meetings



# 3

## SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK TO DATE

# Summary of Feedback

## Benefits of proposed trail

- Nature access
- Place to safely walk, bike or run
- Get around without driving

*“This is an absolutely incredible opportunity for meaningful pedestrian connections in our area.”*

## Concerns about proposed trail

- Increased crime
- Loss of privacy
- Damage to environment
- Benefit to community

*“This is absolutely horrible. We do not want this behind our home. We like privacy and safety.”*

# Summary of Responses to Concerns

## Increased crime

- **DeKalb Police:** “We do not foresee an uptick in property crime as a result of this [Mercer] trail.”
- **Chamblee Parks Police:** “More people means more eyes means less crime.”

## Loss of privacy

- Avg. 350' between homes and proposed trail on HM Creek
- Other trail segments haven't generated this concern



# DeKalb County Environmental Assessment

DeKalb County recognizes its responsibility to protect the County's natural resources

## DeKalb Environmental/Ecological Assessment

- Tree Canopy
- Floodplains/Wetlands: Water Quality and Quantity
- Habitat

## Special Permitting by Local/State/Federal Issuing Authorities

- Federal/State/DeKalb County Stream Buffer Encroachment
- FEMA Floodplain / Floodway
- Wetlands impacts

# PATH Top-Down Construction Methods

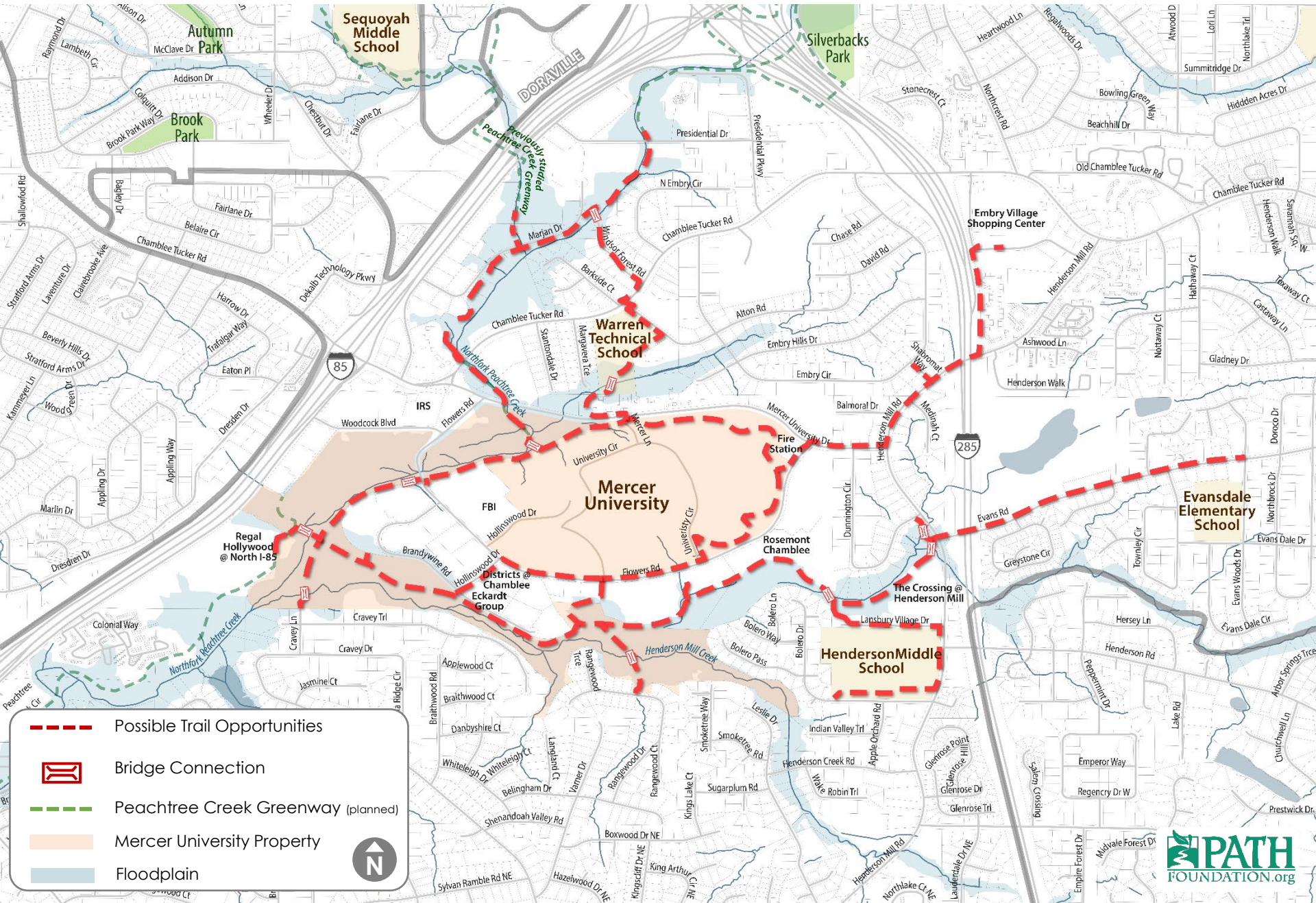
- Minimal tree impact
- Minimal land disturbance
- Trail stays above while wildlife, nutrients and water pass beneath









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**Possible Trail Opportunities**

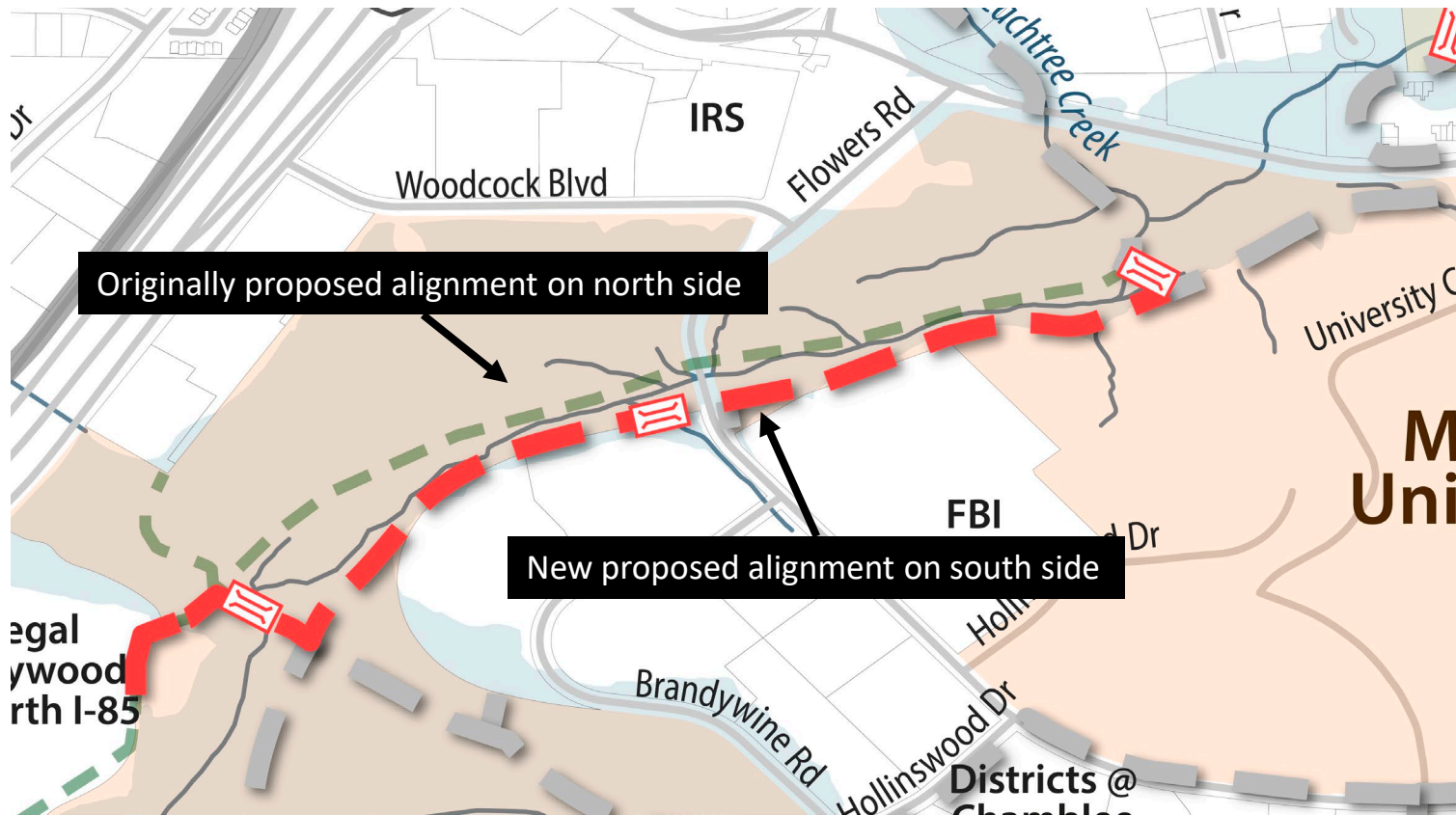
# Possible Trail Opportunities in/near Study Area



-  Possible Trail Opportunities
-  Bridge Connection
-  Peachtree Creek Greenway (planned)
-  Mercer University Property
-  Floodplain



# Peachtree Creek Greenway >> Proposed Shift



## ***A shift to the south side of creek would***

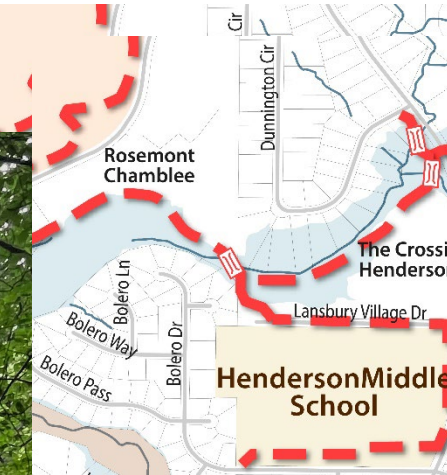
- Leverage sewer alignment (easier to build)
- Avoid wetland on north side of creek
- Access office properties and still have inviting trail experience



# What it could look like . . .



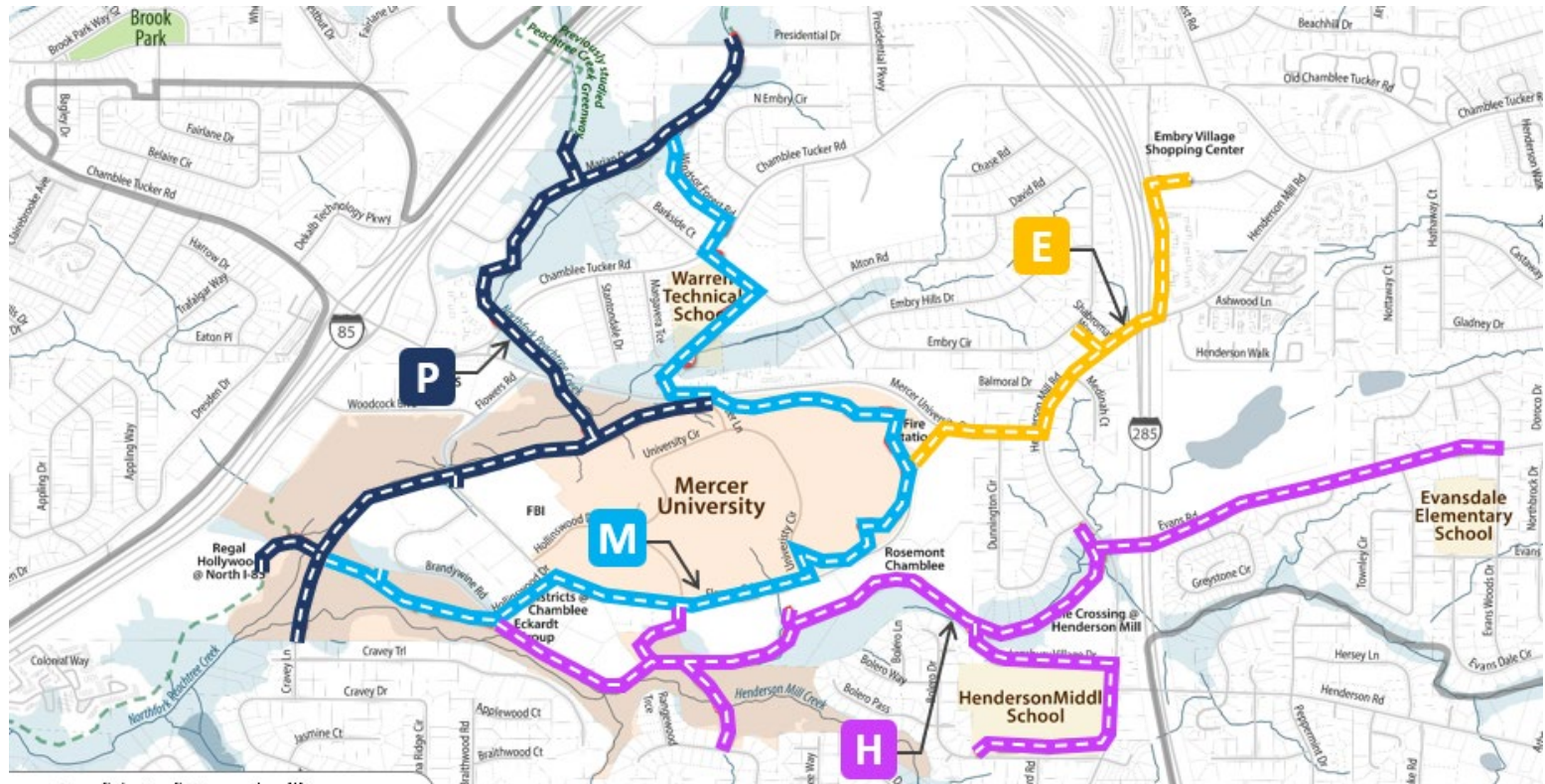
# What it could look like . . .



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**Possible Trail Segments**

# Possible Trail Segments



**P** Peachtree Creek Greenway

**M** Mercer University > Warren Tech School > Peachtree Creek Greenway

**H** Henderson Mill Creek > Henderson Middle > Evansdale Elementary

**E** Embry Village Connector

Scan to give us feedback . . .



Or go to  
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Enter Passcode

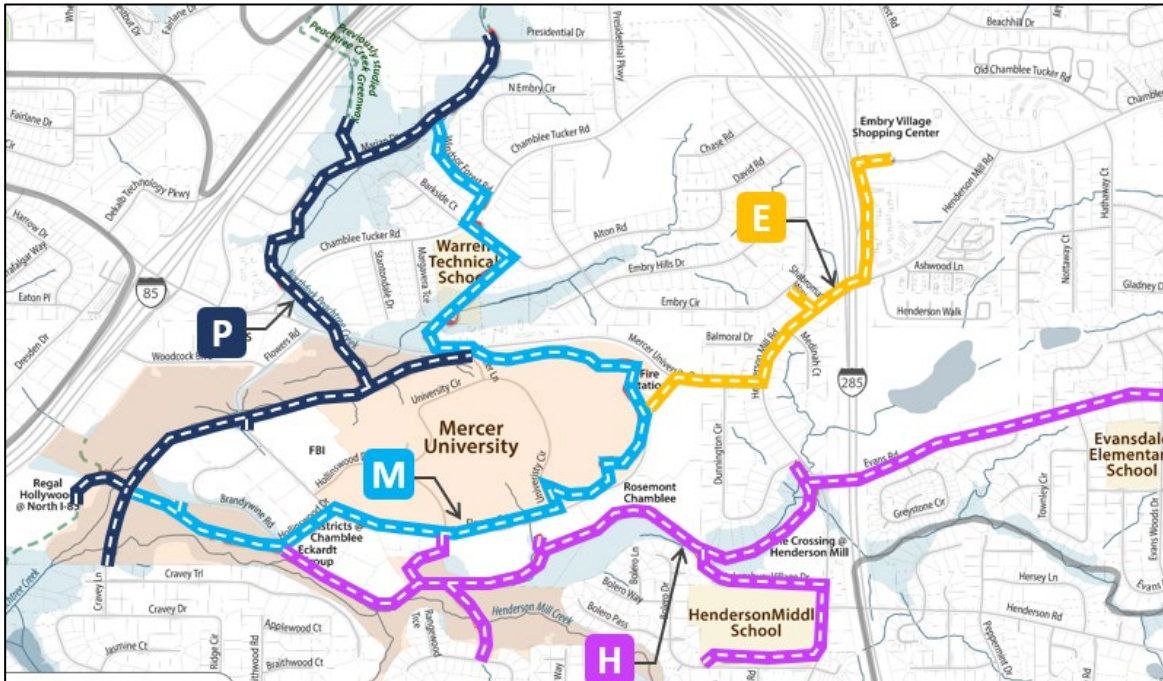
**TRAIL**

If you prefer to use paper, please raise your hand and we will provide a printed copy of the questions.

# POLL QUESTION #1

Which trail segment would you prioritize? (pick one)

- P** Peachtree Creek Greenway
- M** Mercer University > Warren Tech School > Peachtree Creek Greenway
- H** Henderson Mill Creek > Henderson Middle > Evansdale Elementary
- E** Embry Village Connector
- X** None of these trail segments



# POLL QUESTION #2

**How often do you use trails?** (pick one)

- Almost every day
- Multiple times per week
- About once per week
- Occasionally
- Never



## POLL QUESTION #3

**How often would you use trails if one were within a 10-minute walk or bike ride of your house? (pick one)**

- Almost every day
- Multiple times per week
- About once per week
- Occasionally
- Never





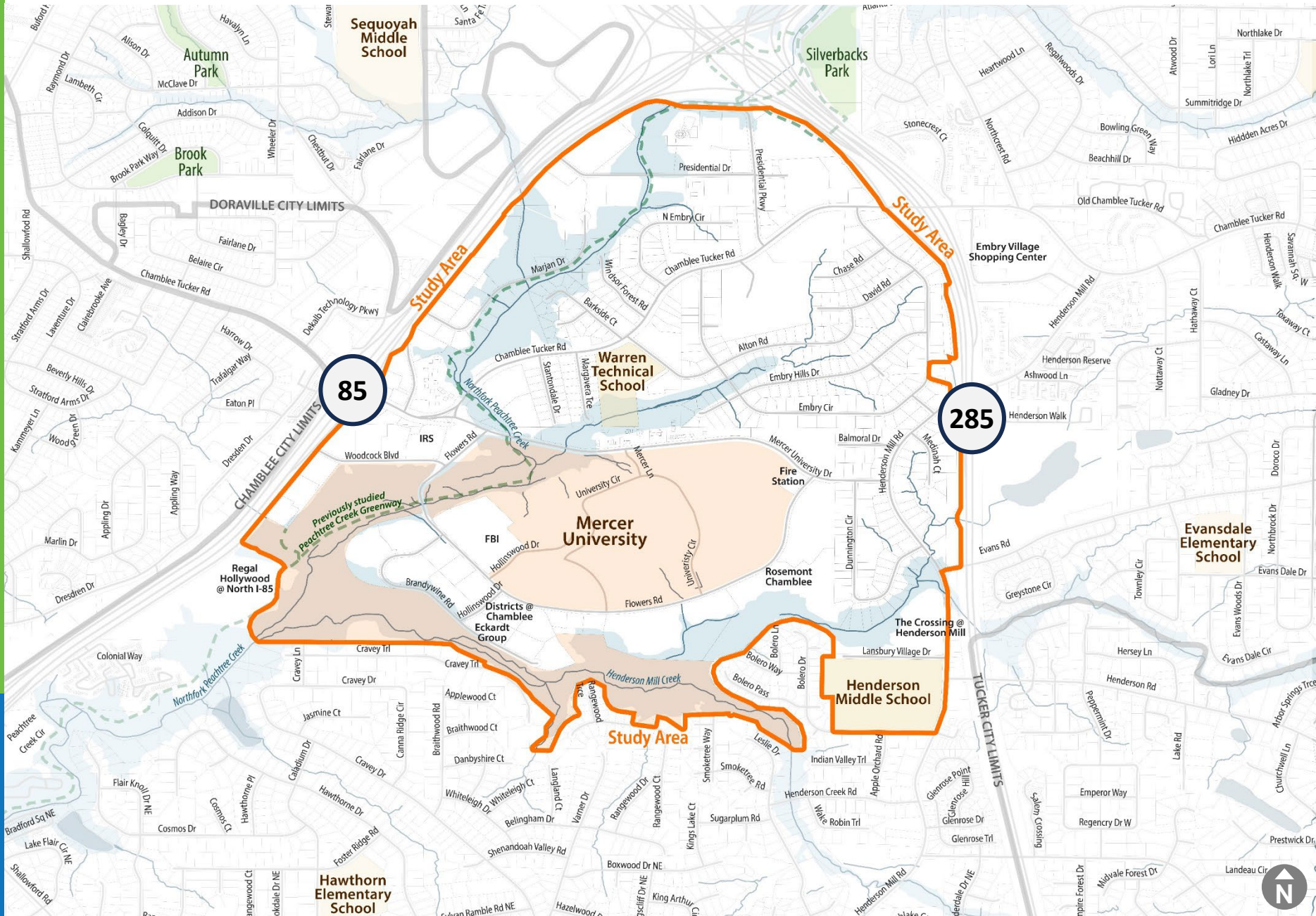
# POLL QUESTION #4

**What are the top two reasons you would use a trail? (pick up to two)**

- Access to natural settings
- Exercise
- Hang out with family and friends
- Walk the dog
- Get where I want to go without driving
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- None, I see no benefits to trails



# Mercer University Trail Study



# POLL QUESTION #5

## Where do you live? (pick one)

- I live in the study area
- I live in unincorporated DeKalb outside the study area
- I live in Chamblee
- I live in Tucker
- I live in Doraville
- I live in another DeKalb County city
- I live outside of DeKalb County



# POLL QUESTION #6

**How do you feel about possibly having trails in your neighborhood?** (slide the scale)

1

2

3

4

5

Opposed

Thrilled



## POLL QUESTION #7

**Of the 3 meetings about the Mercer Trail Study held so far, how many have you attended? (pick one)**

- I attended the open house in August
- I attended the public meeting in September
- I attended both previous meetings
- I haven't attended any previous meetings



# POLL QUESTION #8

**How did you hear about this meeting?** (pick as many as you'd like)

- At previous meeting
- Word of mouth
- Social media (Facebook, NextDoor, etc.)
- County or Commissioner website
- Other



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**Next Steps**

# Next Steps

- Fourth Trail Study Public Meeting TBD
- Summarize Feedback, Finalize Trail Study Feb. 2024
- Present Final Trail Study for County Adoption Mar. 2024



# Q & A



# Q&A Format

## Option 1: use the mic

- Limit your time to 3 minutes

## Option 2: scan to submit your question



Or go to  
[www.pigeonhole.at](http://www.pigeonhole.at)

Enter Passcode

**TRAIL**

- Limit your questions to the proposed trail segments
- Please respect different points of view
- We will attempt to answer all questions
- Hard stop at 8:00 p.m.

Scan to submit your questions



Or go to  
[www.pigeonhole.at](http://www.pigeonhole.at)

Enter Passcode

**TRAIL**

# Q&A

Q&A: Mercer University Trail Study Q&A

Session starts in

**12 h 59 m 08 s**

Ask your questions at [www.pigeonhole.at/QUESTION](http://www.pigeonhole.at/QUESTION)

## SESSIONS

Q&A: Mercer University Trail Study Q&A



*Thank you!*

**Find tonight's Mercer Trail Study presentation here**

<https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/parks/programs-and-events>

Scroll down to Presentations and click on Mercer Trail Study

**Send feedback about the Mercer Trail Study to**

[tmattox@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:tmattox@dekalbcountyga.gov)

Subject = Mercer Trail Study