



Mercer University Trail Study

Public Meeting #2 – September 27, 2023



Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Planning Process
3. Public Information Open House Summary
4. Neighborhood Concerns
5. Trail Opportunities
6. Looking Ahead
7. Q&A

Meeting Etiquette

Please

- Sign in
- Keep an open mind
- Be respectful of different points of view
- No heckling or applause
- Send your feedback to Teriya Mattox: tmattox@dekalbcountyga.gov
- Tell us what you like as well as what you don't like

This presentation will be available for viewing at:

dekalbcountyga.gov/parks/programs-and-events

Q&A Format

- At the end of the presentation we will answer your written questions.
- Please write your questions on the note card and hand them to us.
- If you need a question card during the meeting, please raise your hand and we will deliver one to you.

1



Introduction

Introduction - PATH Team & Partners



Greta deMayo
Executive Director



Eric Ganther
Transportation
Planner



Pete Pellegrini
Project/ Construction
Manager



Cooper Brock
Transportation
Planner



Nico Shen
Landscape Architect



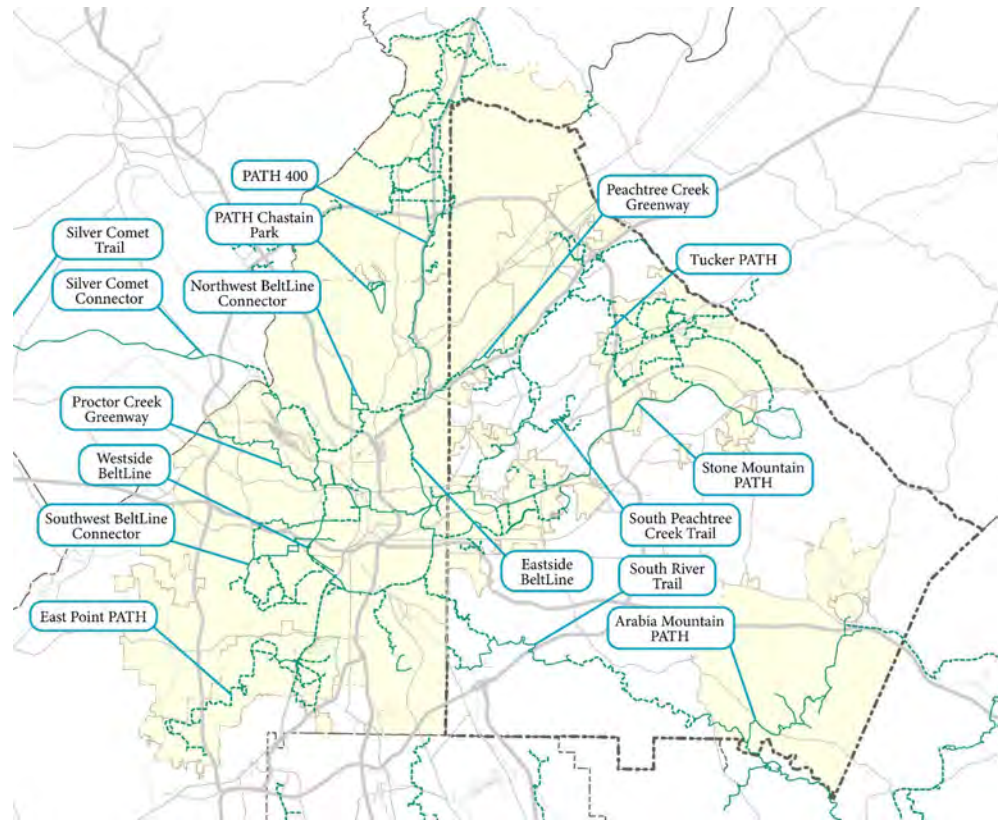
Andie Eller
Landscape Architectural
Designer

Partners:



What is the PATH Foundation?

- We plan, design and build 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

South River Trail



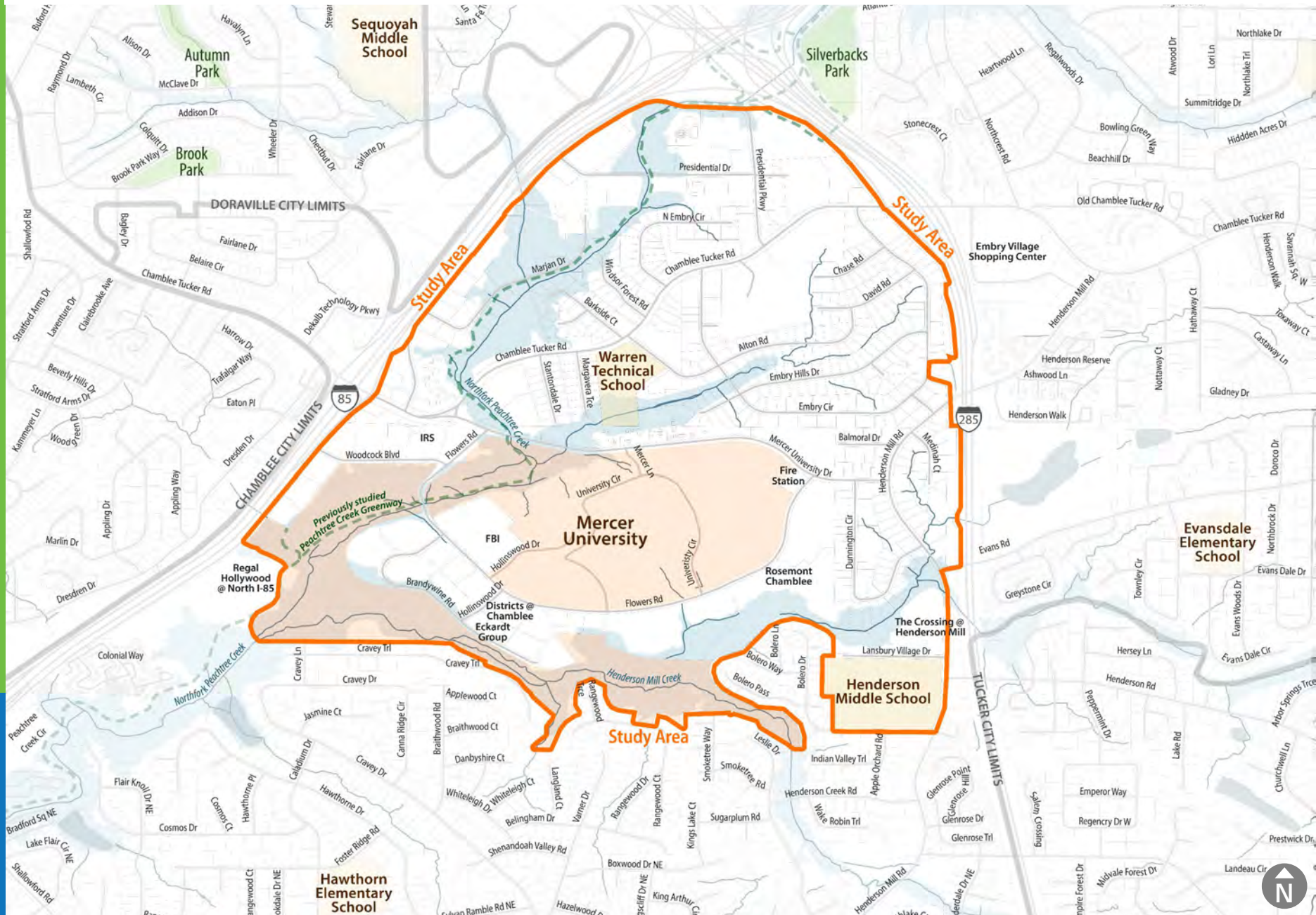
Arabia Mountain Trail



Peachtree Creek Greenway



Mercer University Trail Study

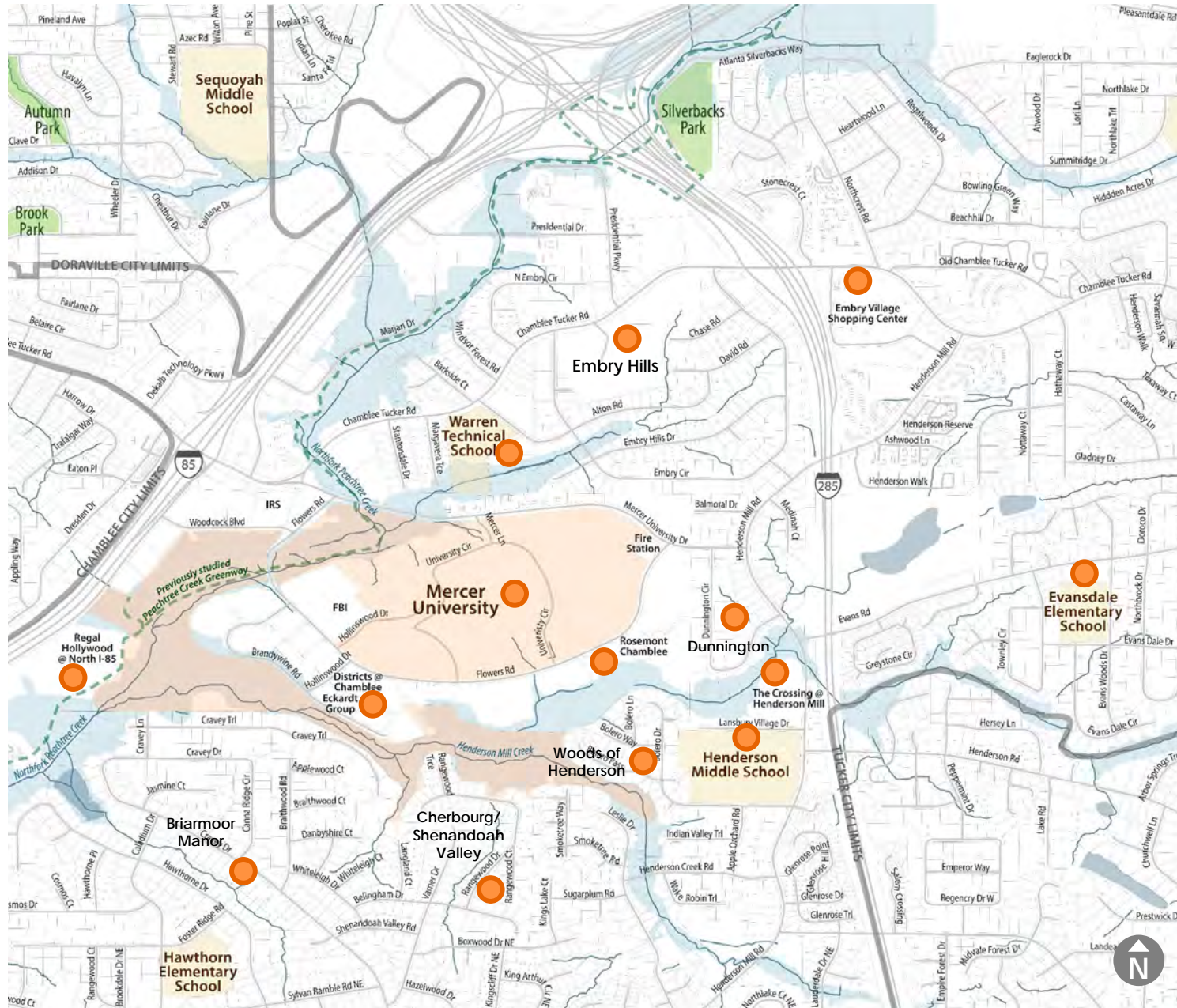


2



Planning Process

Key Destinations in and near Trail Study Area



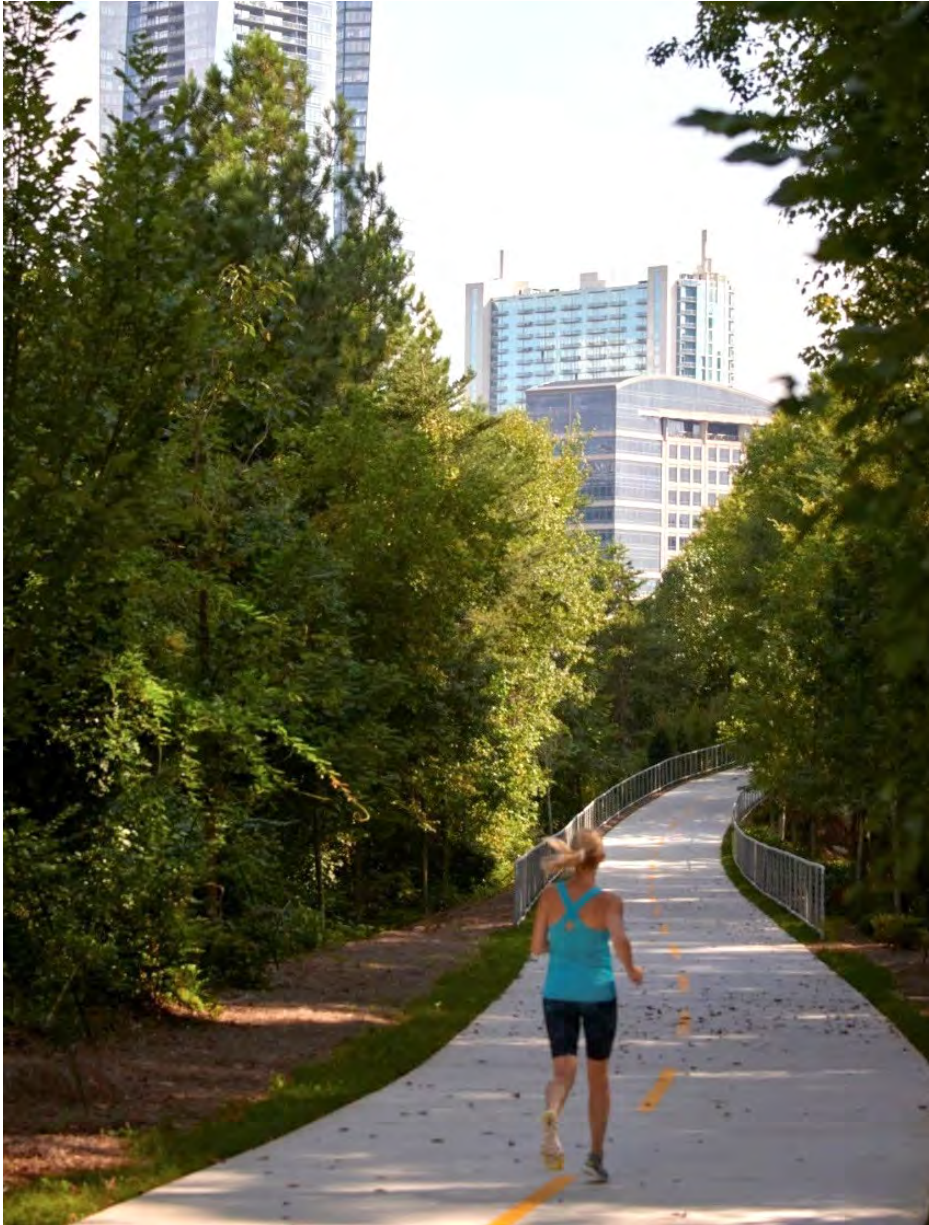
Measurable Goals of the Trail Study

- Work with the community to propose a high-quality trail amenity 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

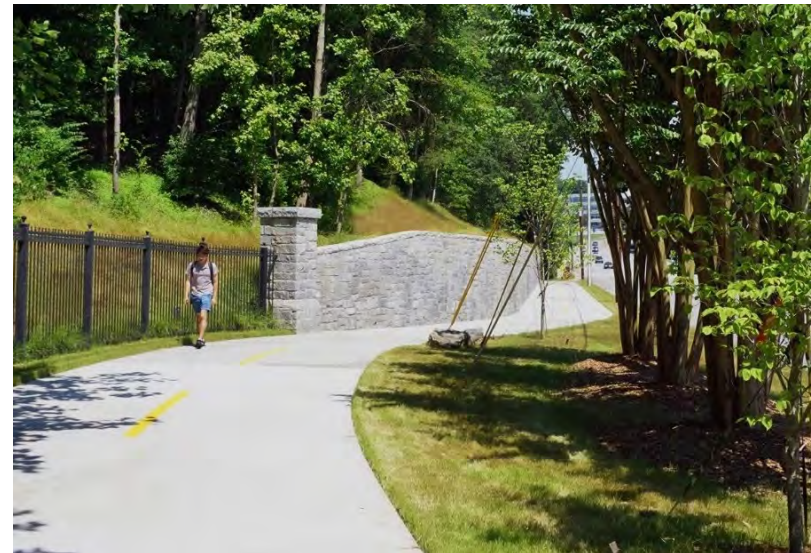
Trail Types – Greenway



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

Trail Types – Sidepath

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



Trail Types – Calm Street



- Bicyclists and vehicles share low-volume, low-speed roadways for short distances where greenways and sidepaths are not feasible
- Roadways get signage, paint and low-impact infrastructure strategies to warn drivers of the presence of trail users
- Pedestrians and wheelchair users share sidewalks or the roadway

3

SUMMARY OF TRAIL STUDY
OPEN HOUSE IN AUGUST 2023

Public Information Open House (8/24/23)

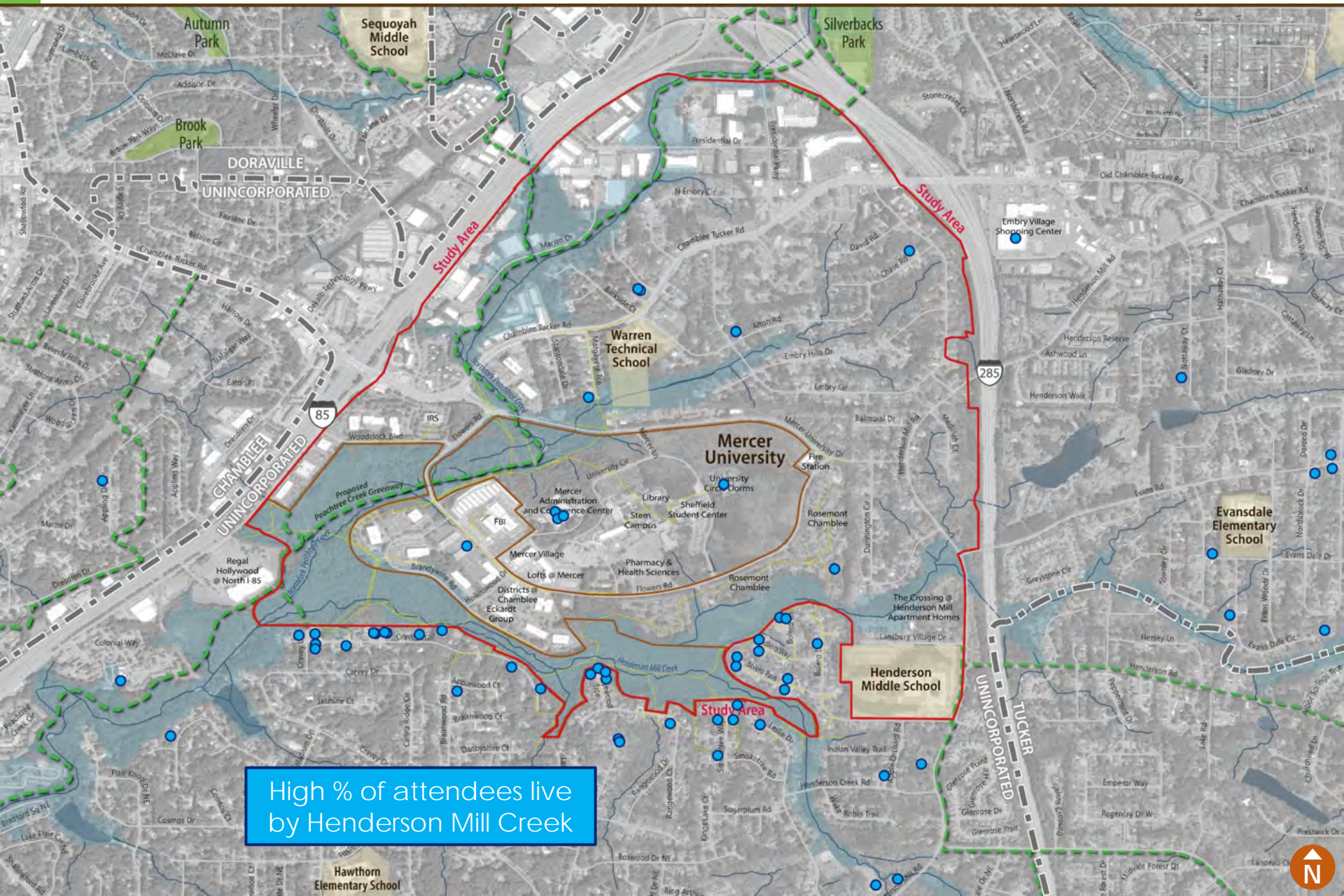
- Over 50 attendees
- Informal interactive format
- “dot exercise” + 1:1 chats
- Trail study survey launched that same day

Initial Feedback

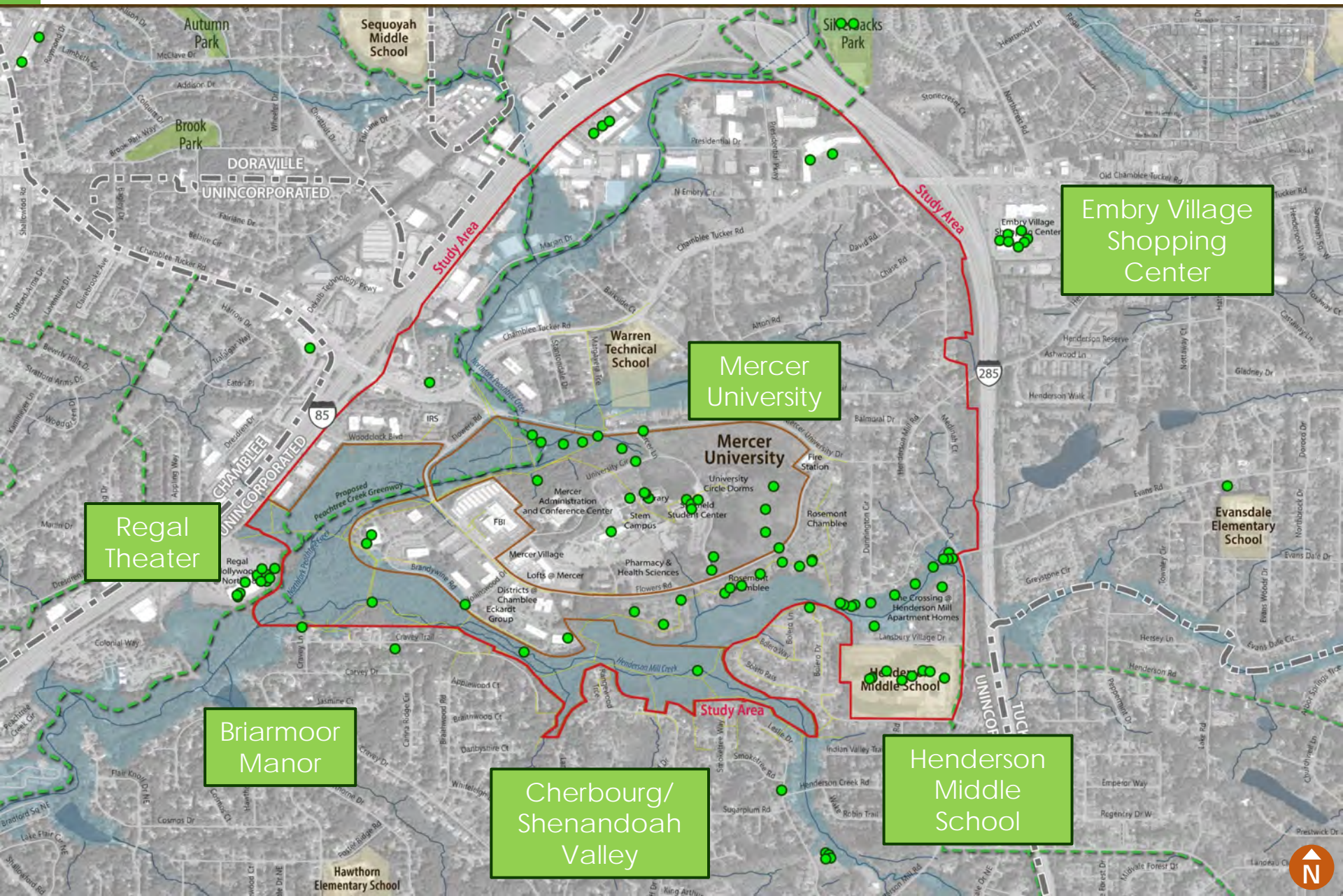
- Residents concerned trail would be in backyards
- Neighbors want to know about the planning process
- Concerns about crime, privacy and environmental impacts

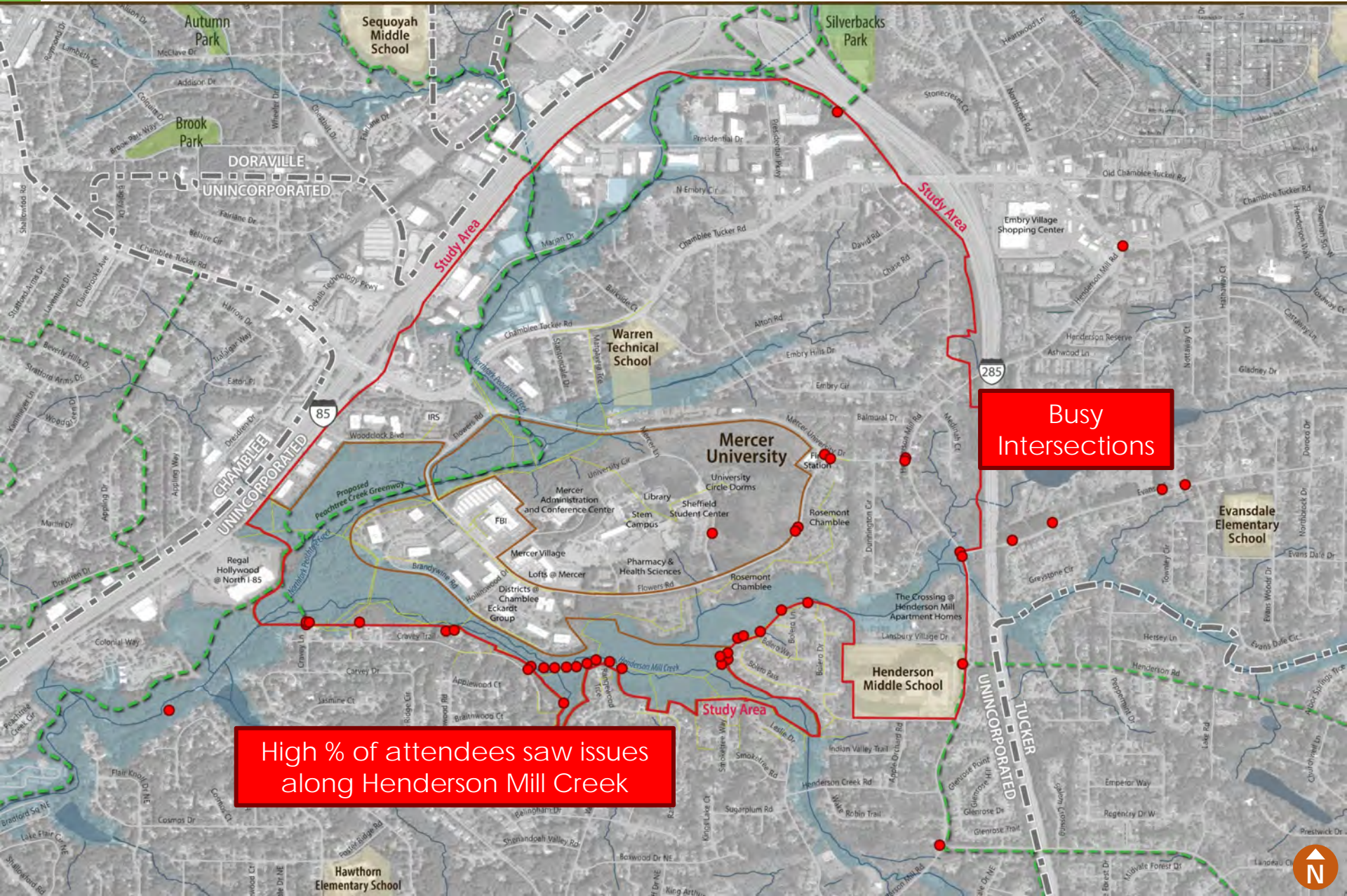


Dot Exercise: *I live or work here* → .



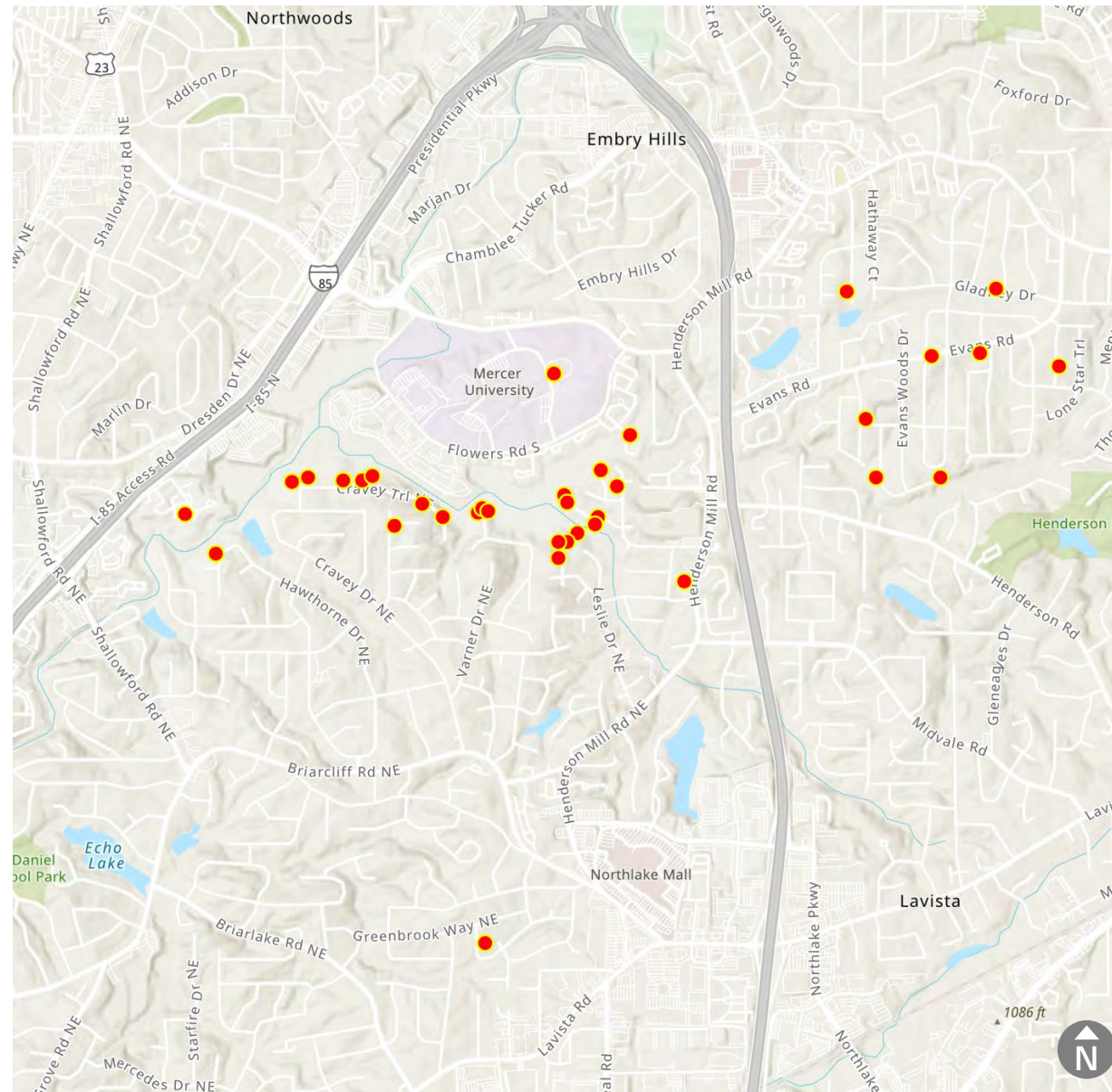
Dot Exercise: *I want to go here* → •





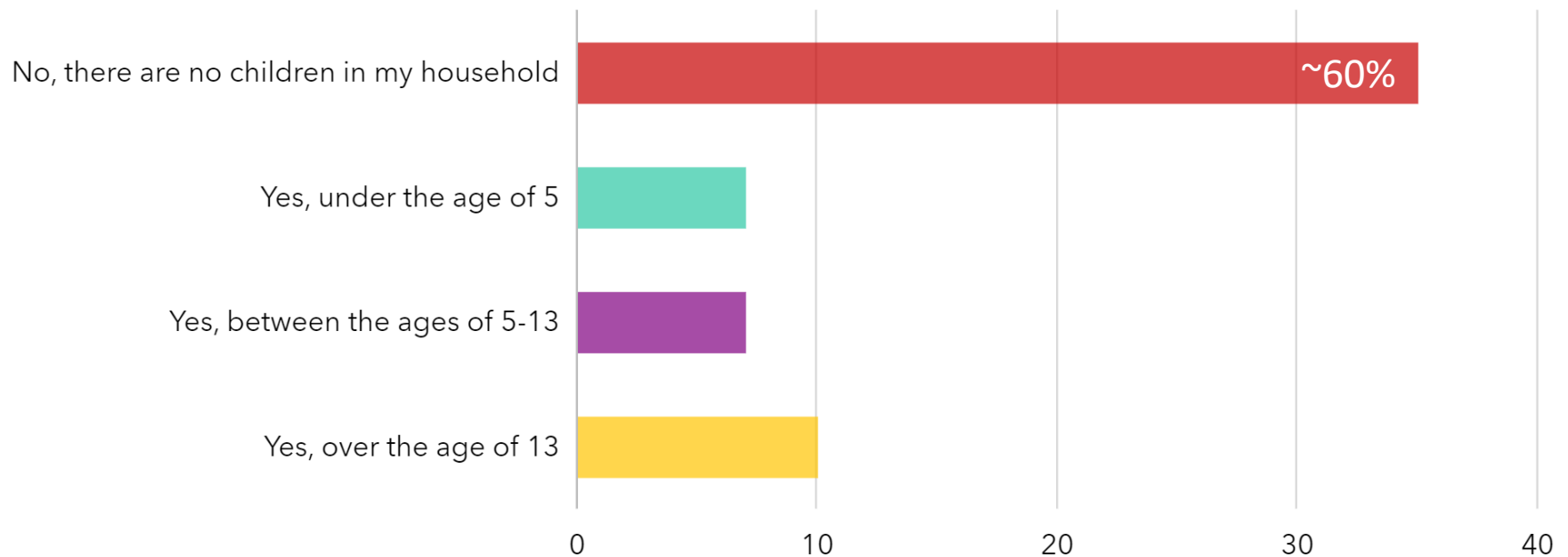
Survey Results

- Open August 24 – 31
- 59 respondents
- ~2/3 of respondents live along Henderson Mill Creek



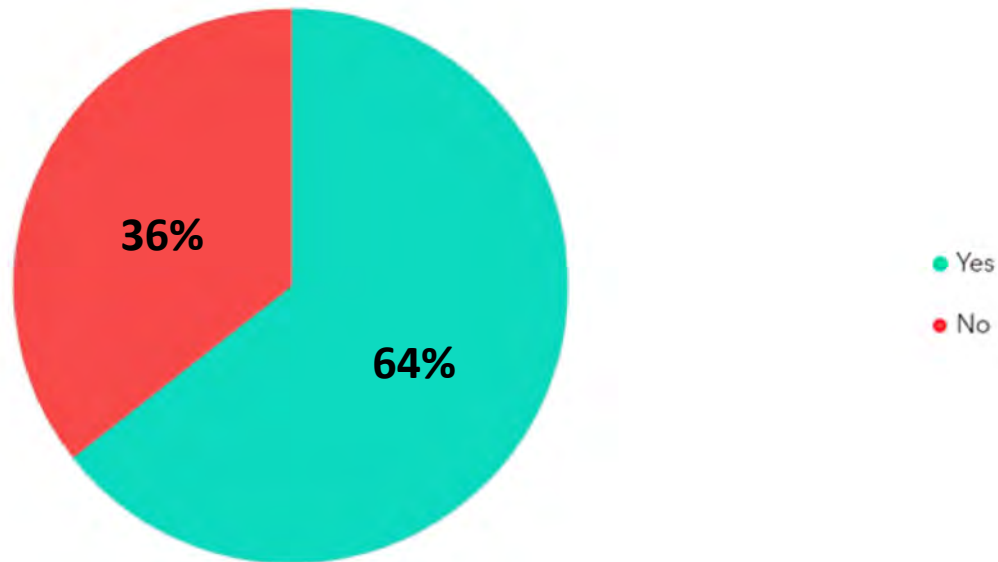
Survey Results

Q: Are there any children in your household?



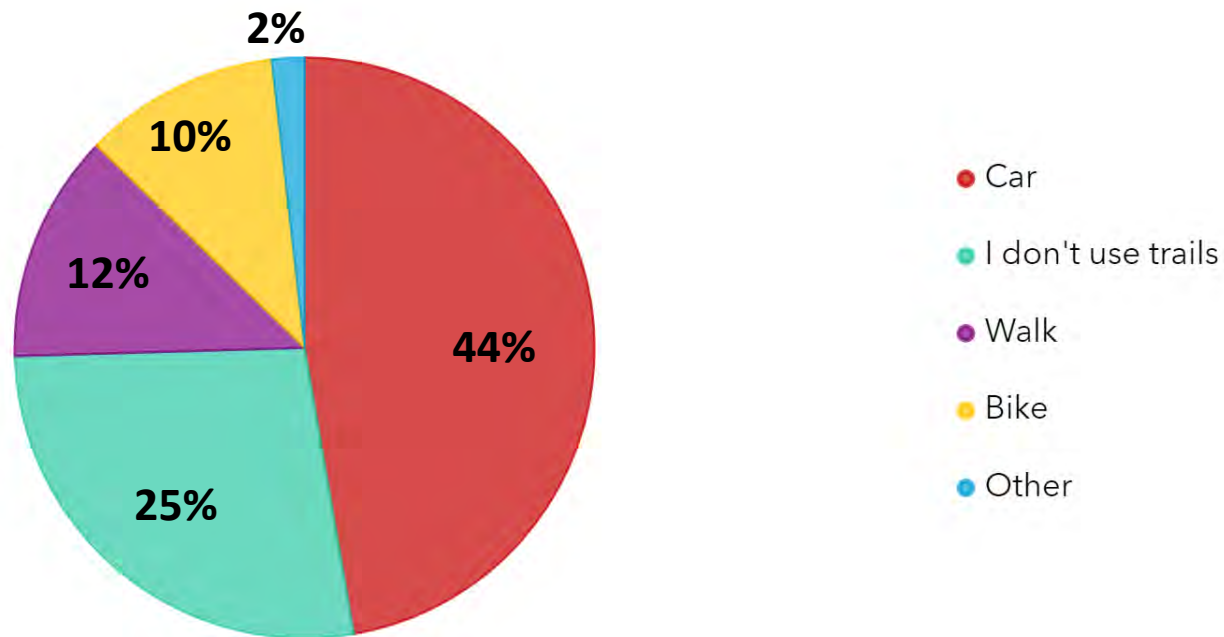
Survey Results

Q: Do you currently use trails in/around DeKalb County?



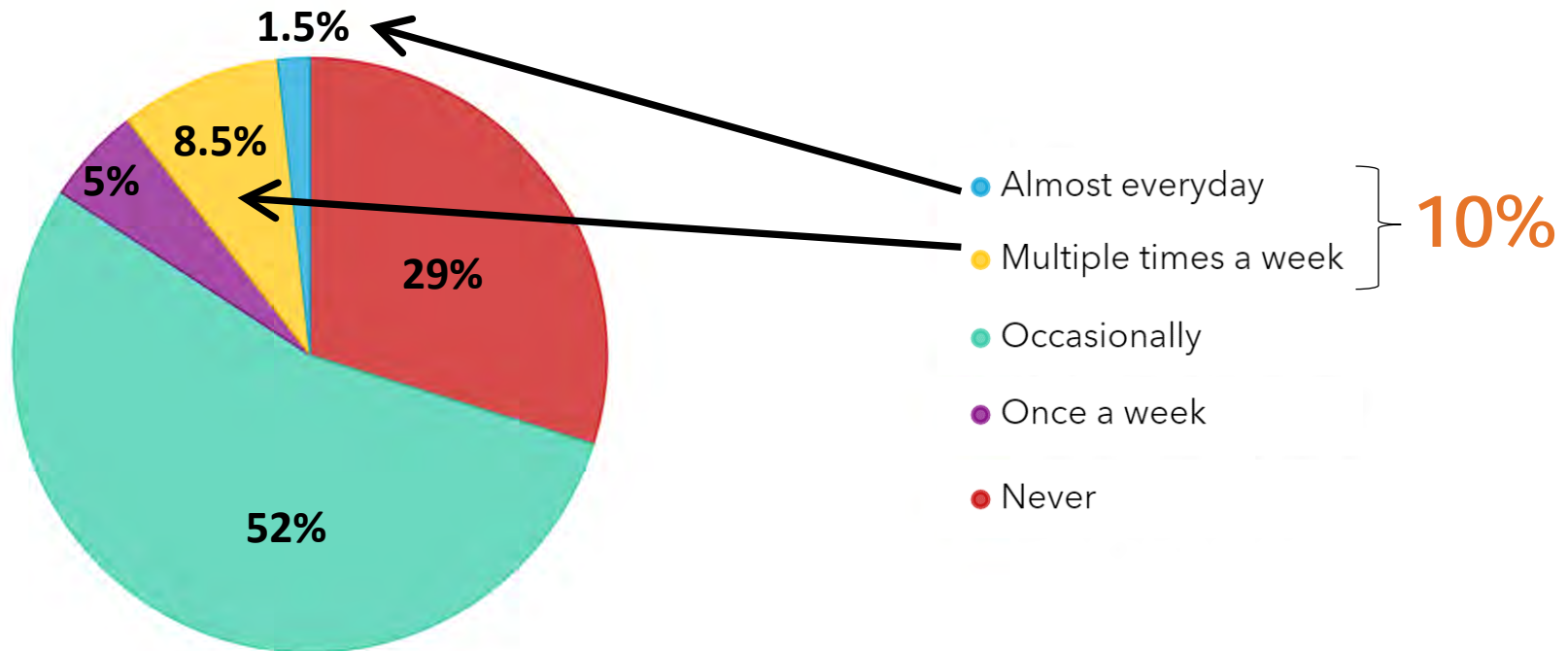
Survey Results

Q: If you go to trails, how do you get to them?



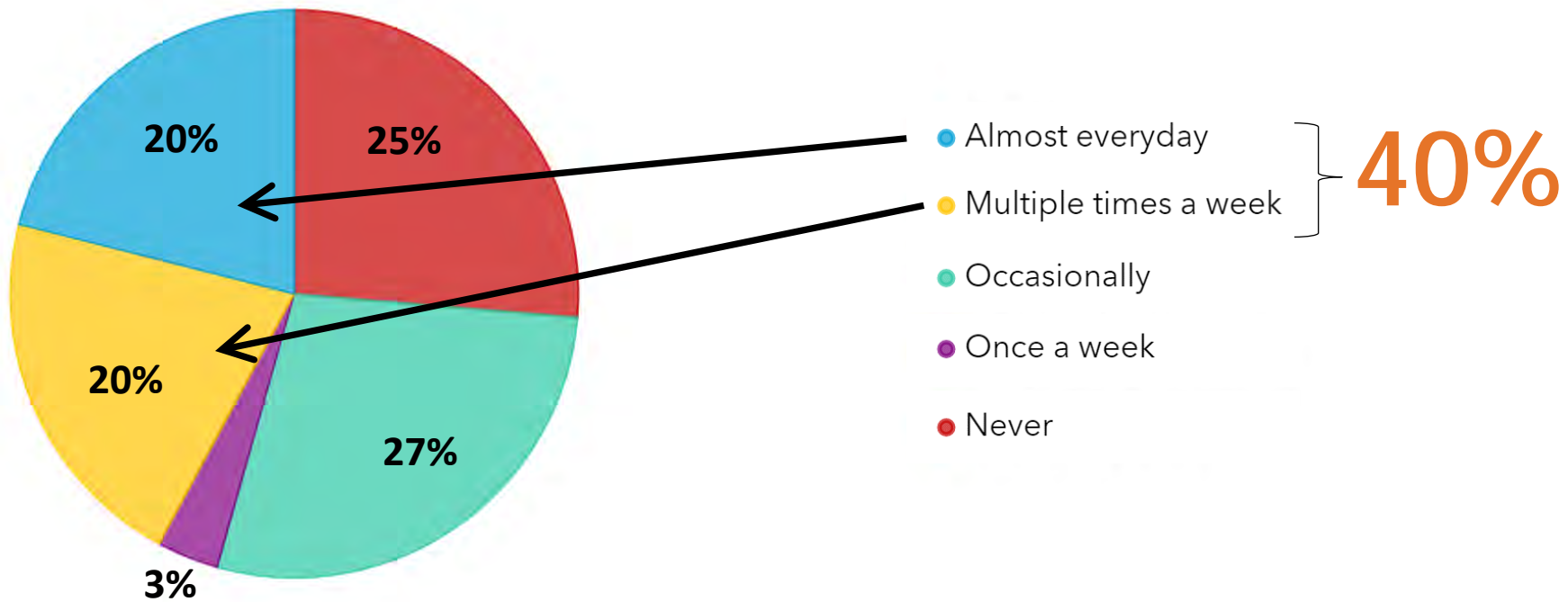
Survey Results

Q: How often do you use trails in/around DeKalb County today?



Survey Results

Q: If you lived **within a 10-minute walk** of a trail, how often would you use it?

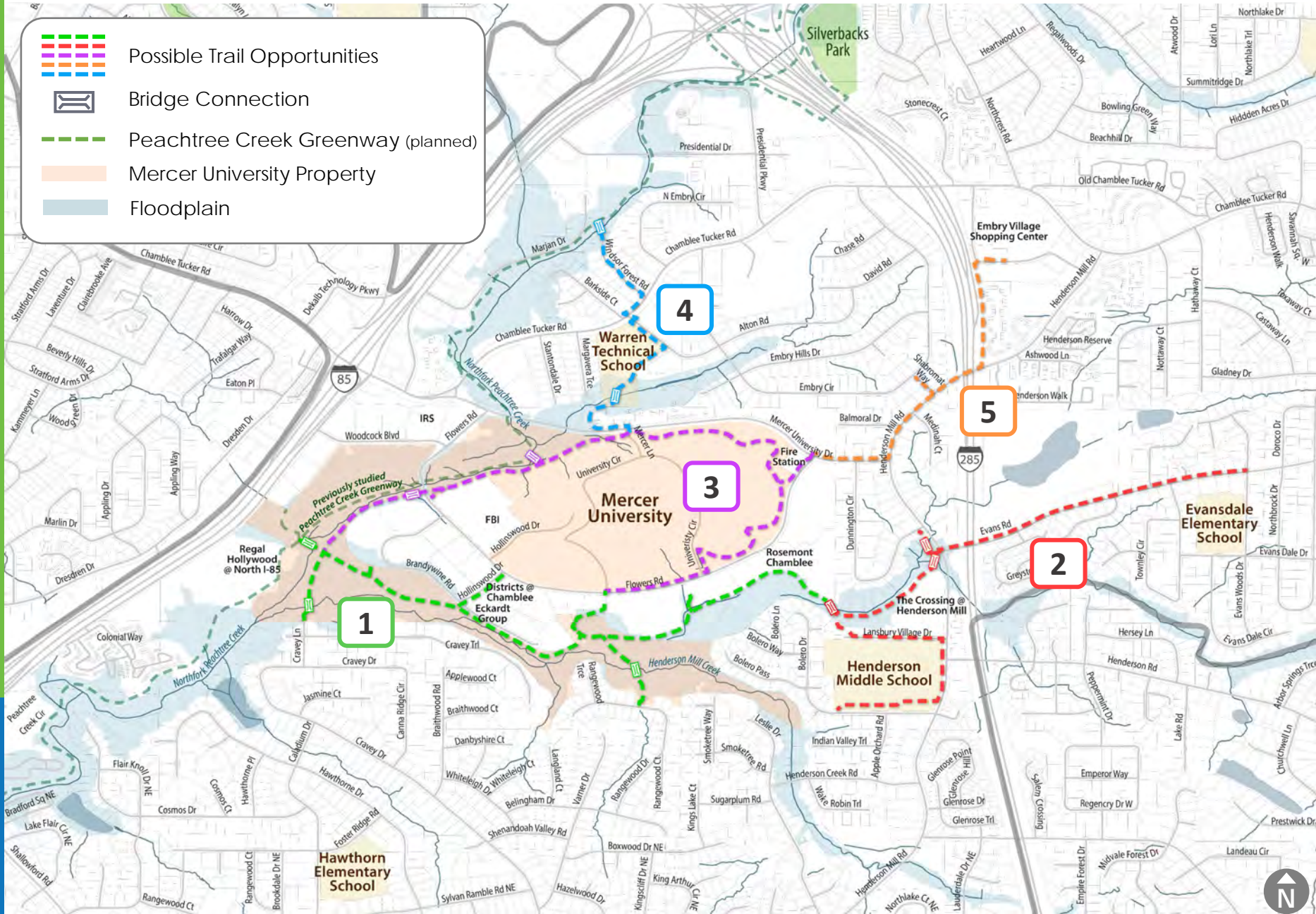


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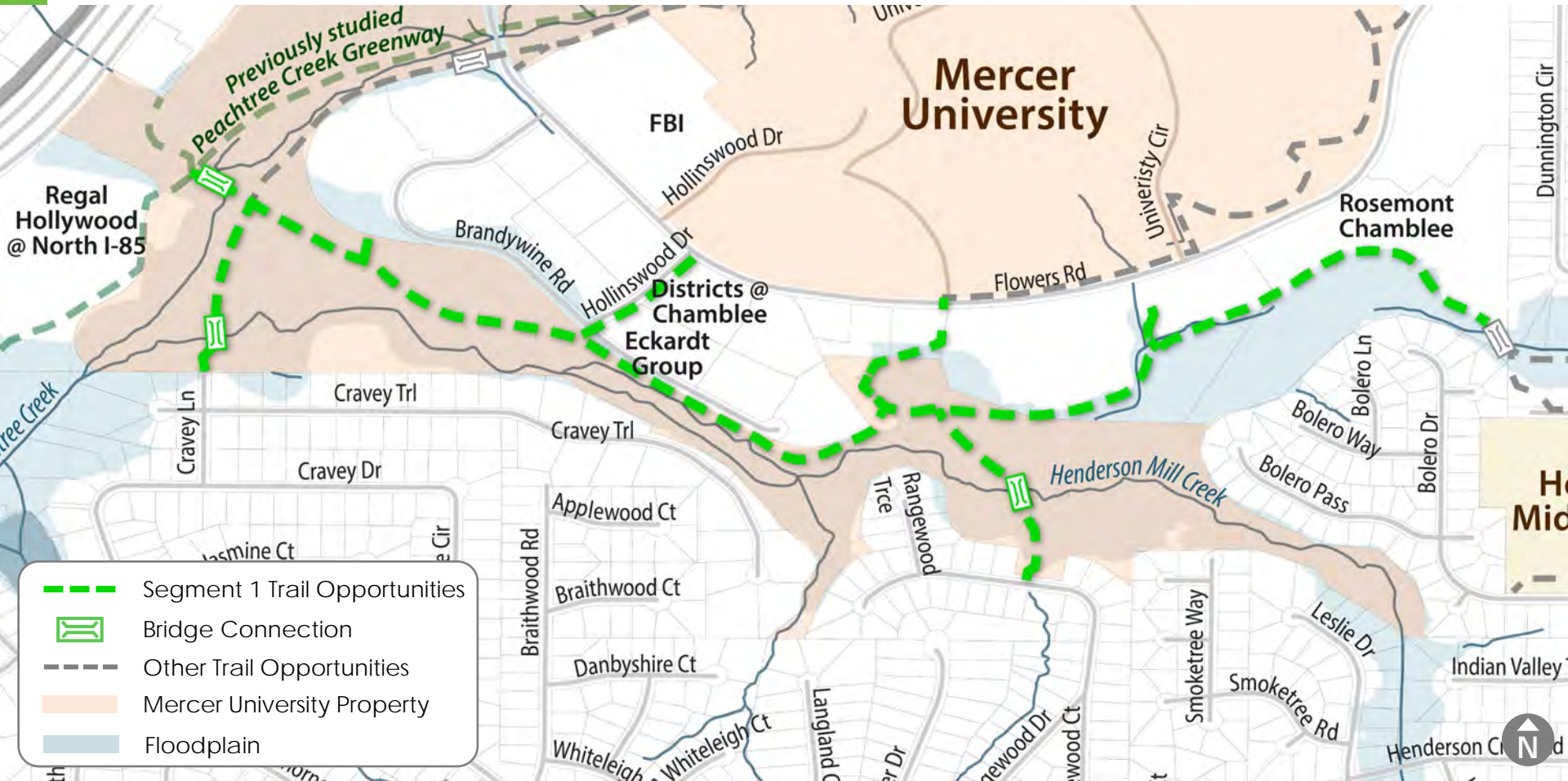


Possible Trail Opportunities

Possible Trail Opportunities

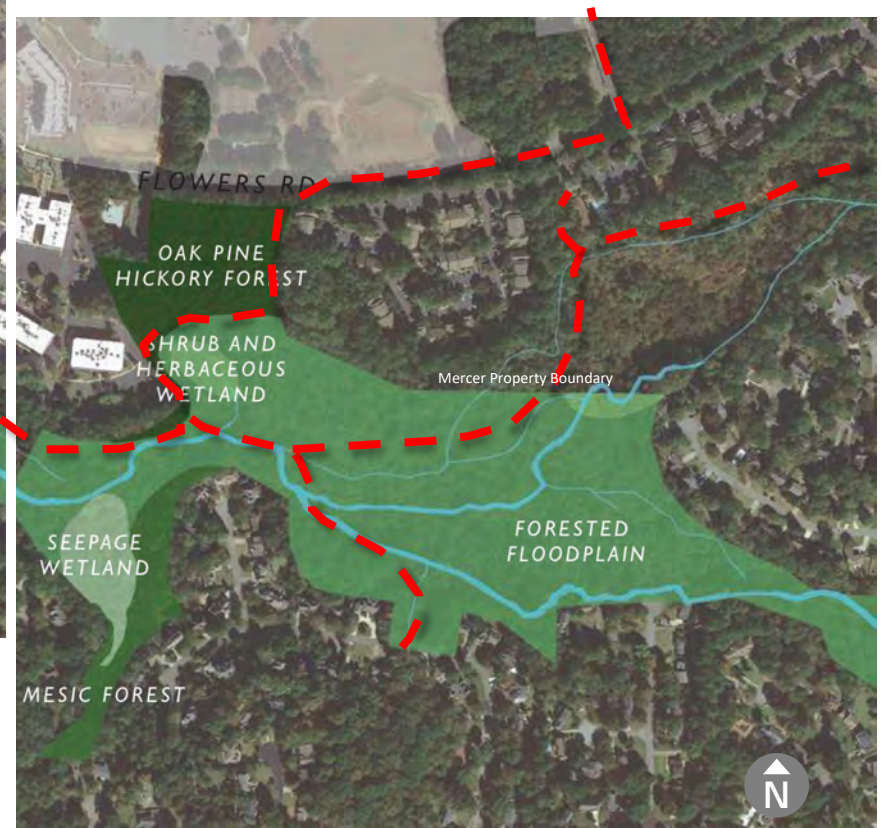
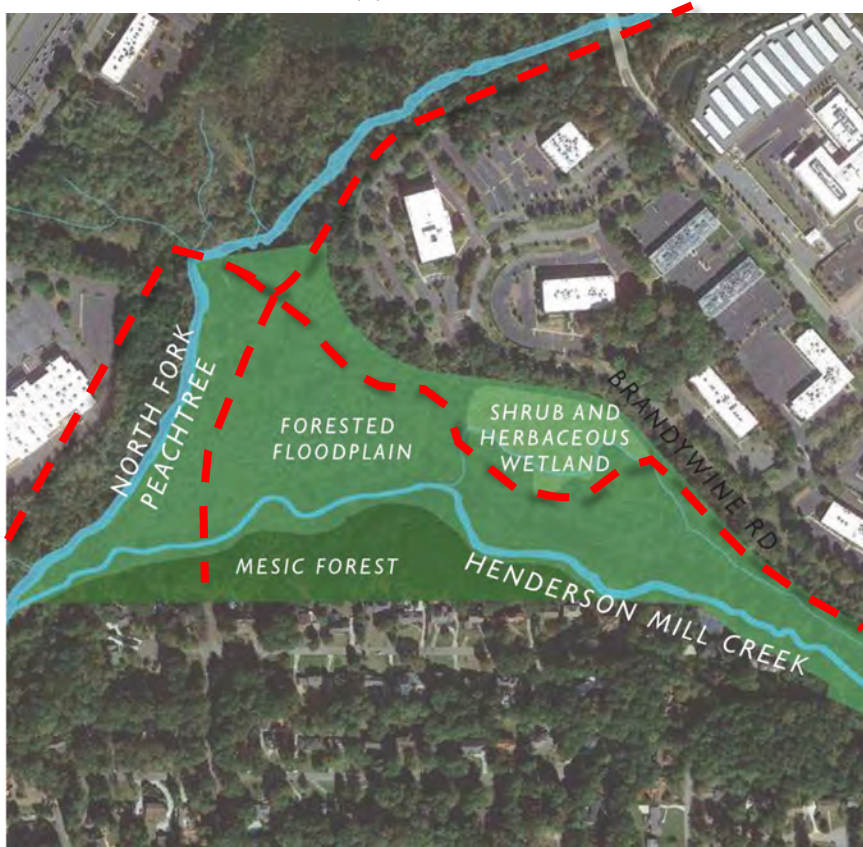


Trail Opportunities – Segment 1

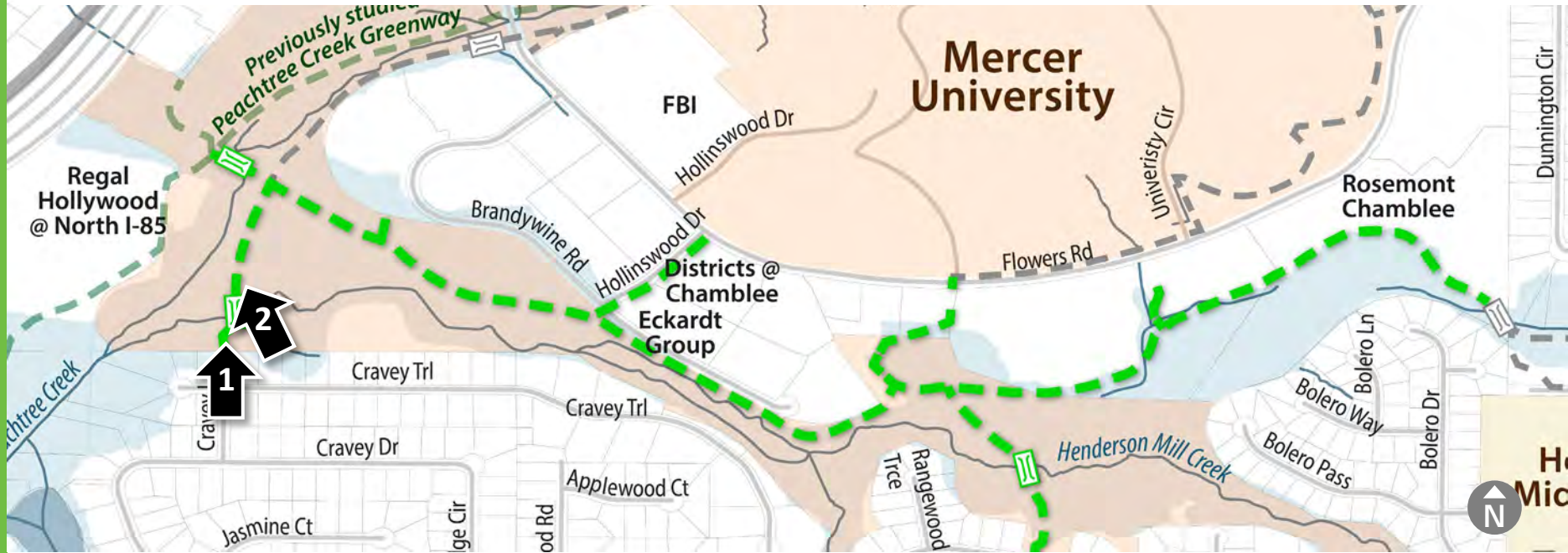


Mercer Urban Forest Study – Segment 1 Detail

----- Possible Trail Opportunities



Segment 1 – Cravey Lane Spur



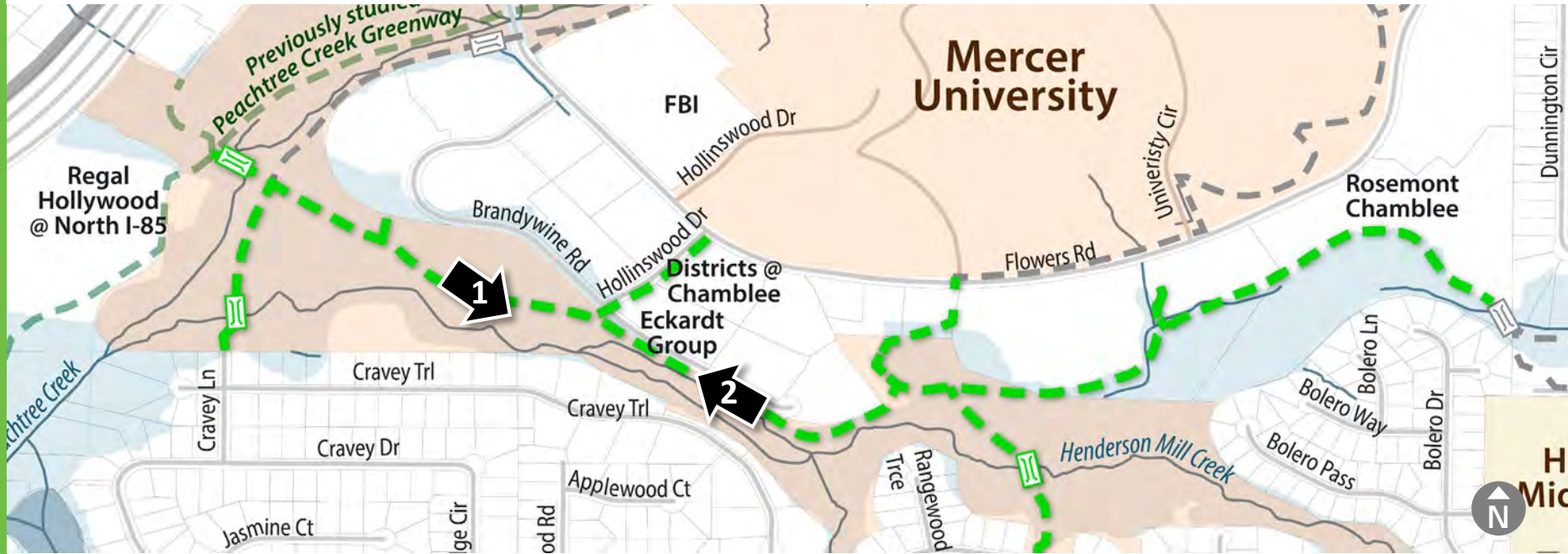
1 End of Cravey Lane NE looking towards Mercer Property



2 Sewer line north of Cravey Lane looking Northwest



Segment 1 – Henderson Mill Creek at Brandywine



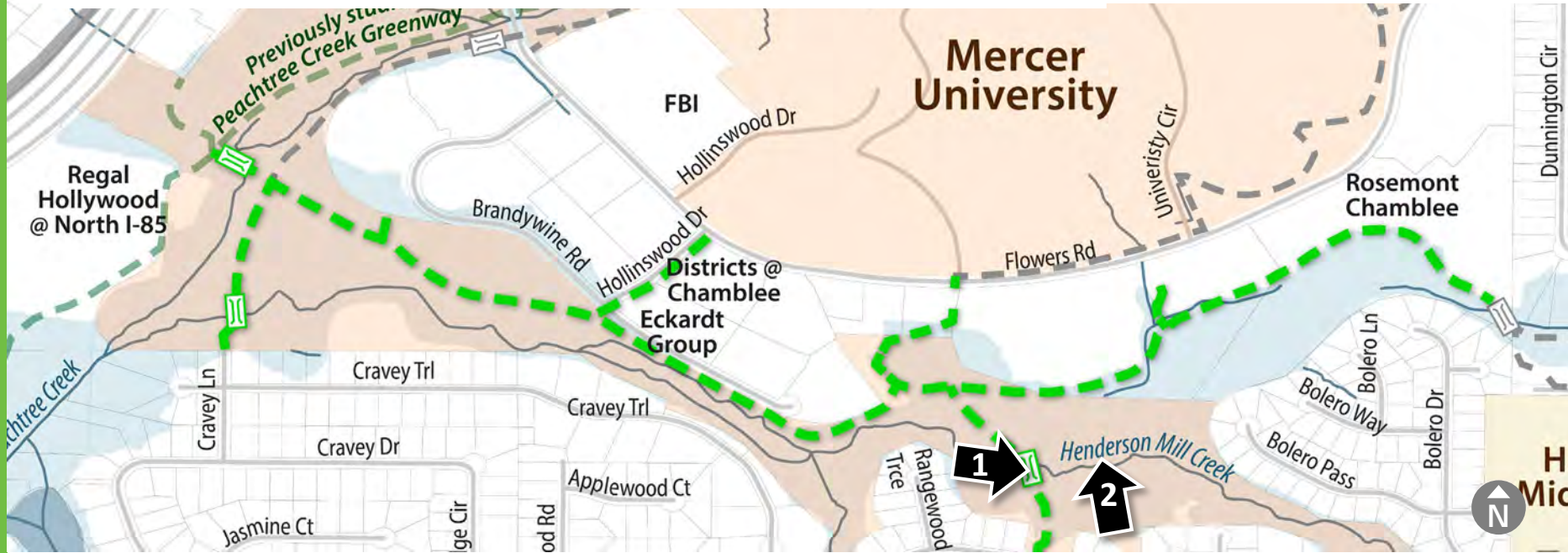
1 Forested floodplain (photo courtesy HGOR)



2 Land between Brandywine Road and Henderson Mill Creek



Segment 1 - Rangewood Drive



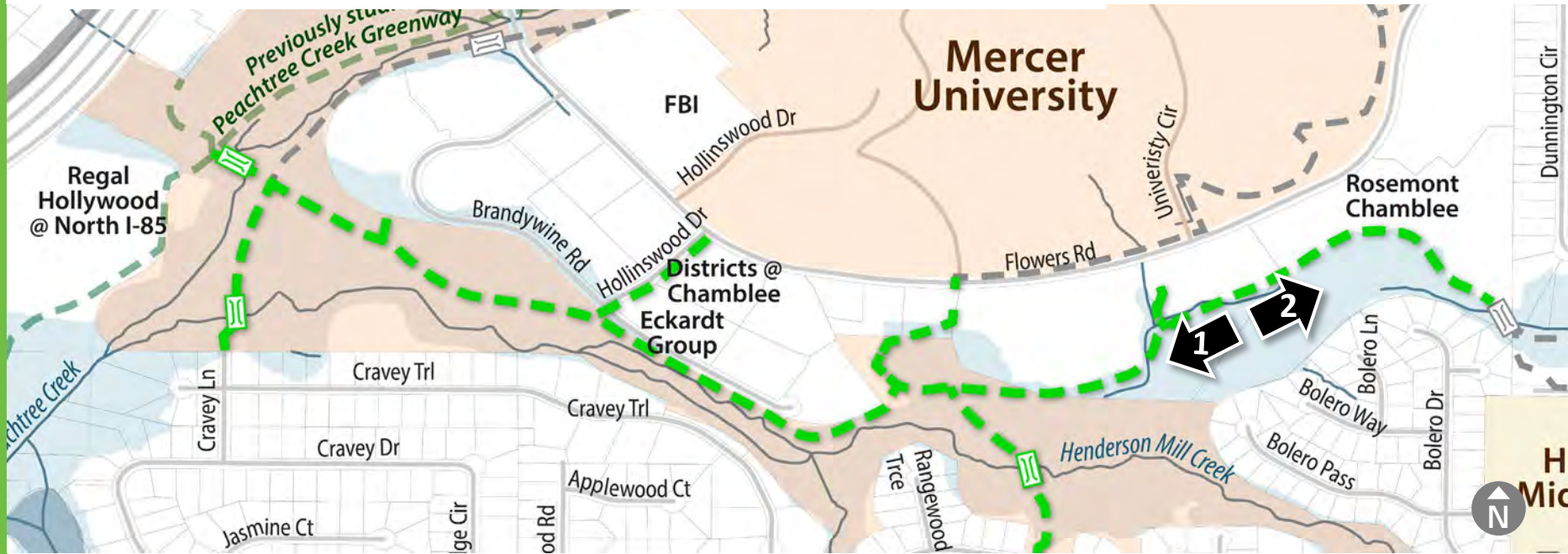
1 Mercer property border near Rangewood Drive



2 Aerial view of Mercer property north of Rangewood Drive



Segment 1 - Elevated Trail



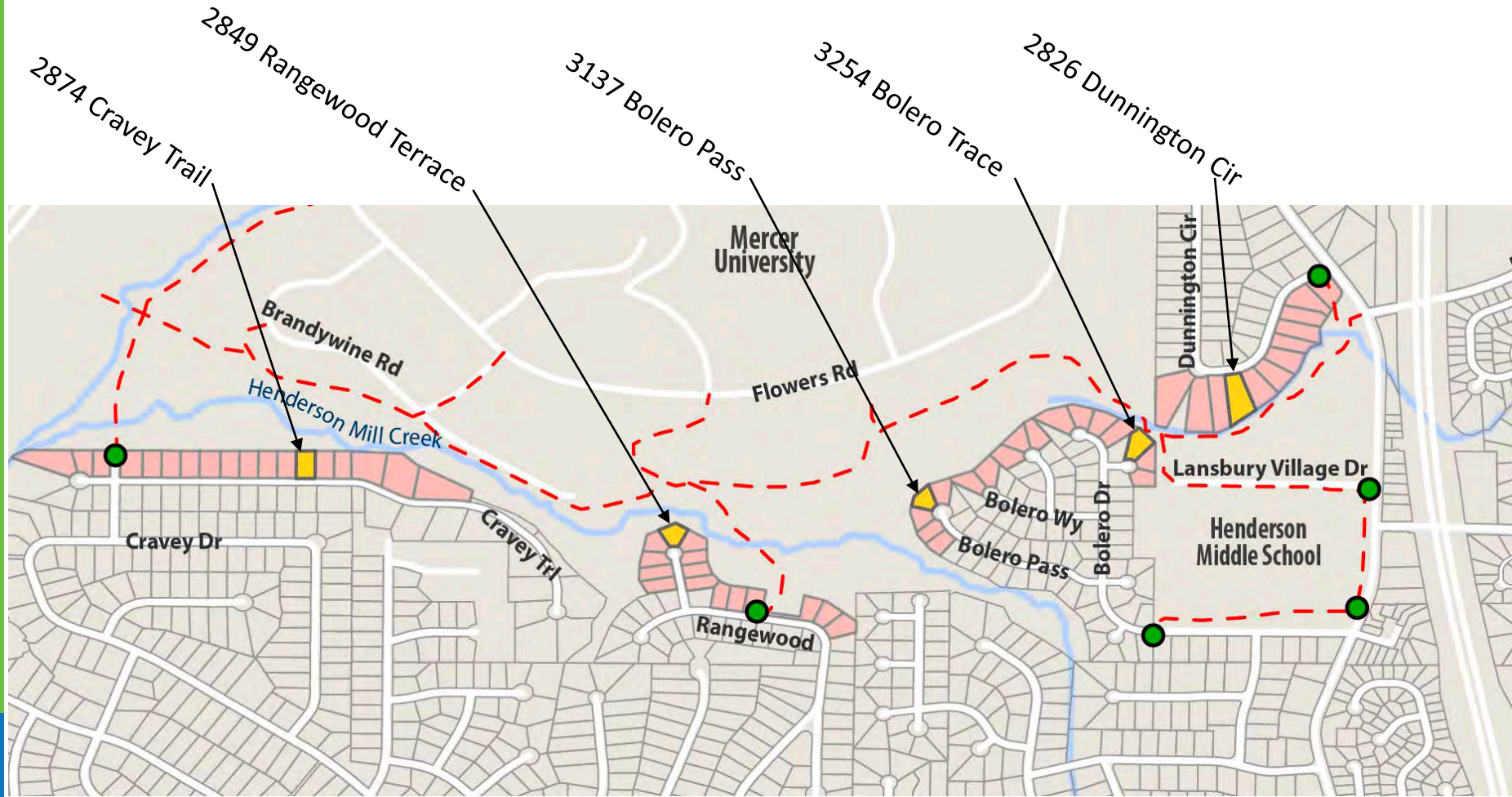
1 Looking west from apartment complex detention pond



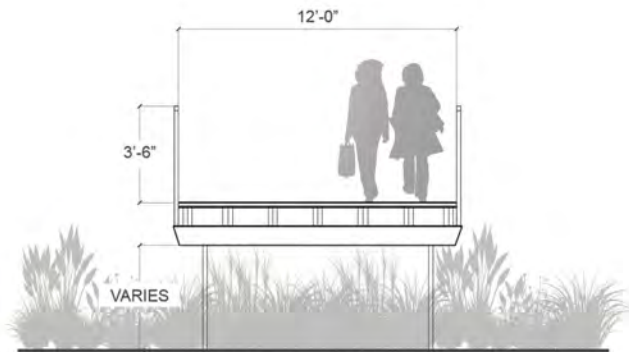
2 Looking east from apartment complex detention pond



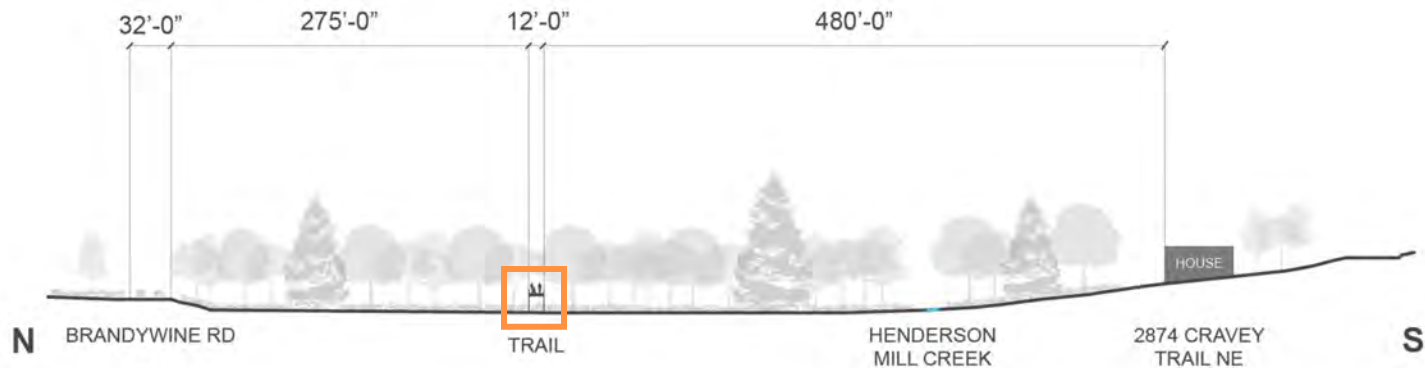
Measuring Distance from Homes to Proposed Trail



Segment 1 - Cravey Trail Cross Section

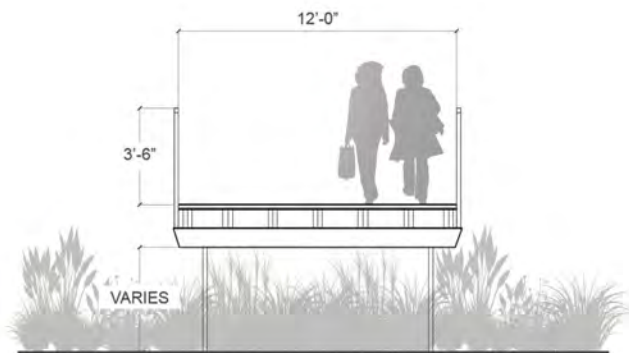


Trail Cross Section Enlargement

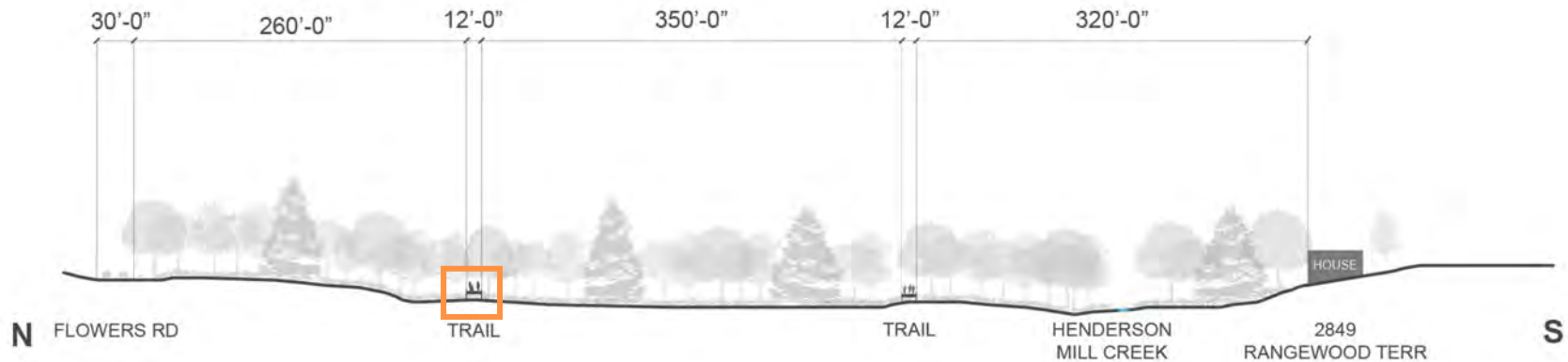
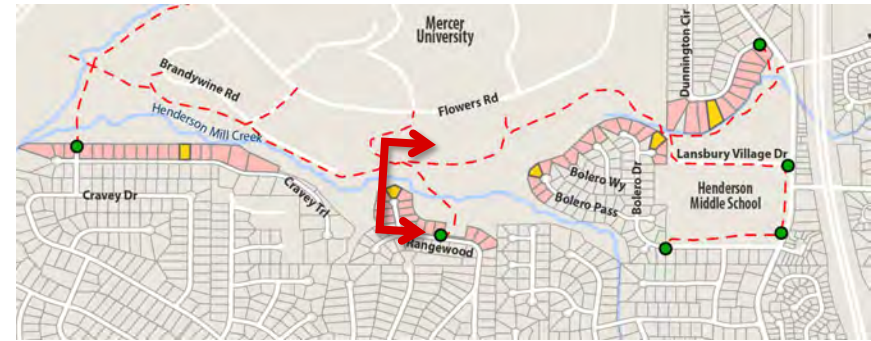


Proposed Trail Cross Section

Segment 1 - Rangewood Terrace Cross Section

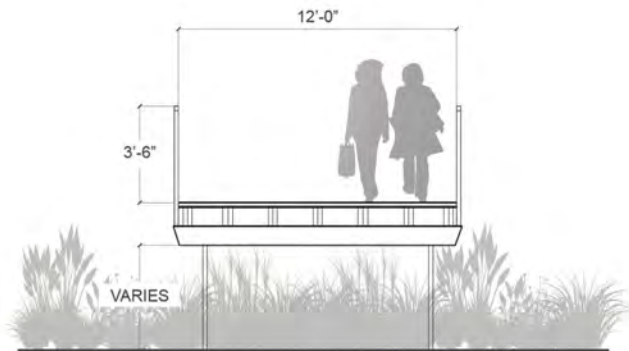


Trail Cross Section Enlargement

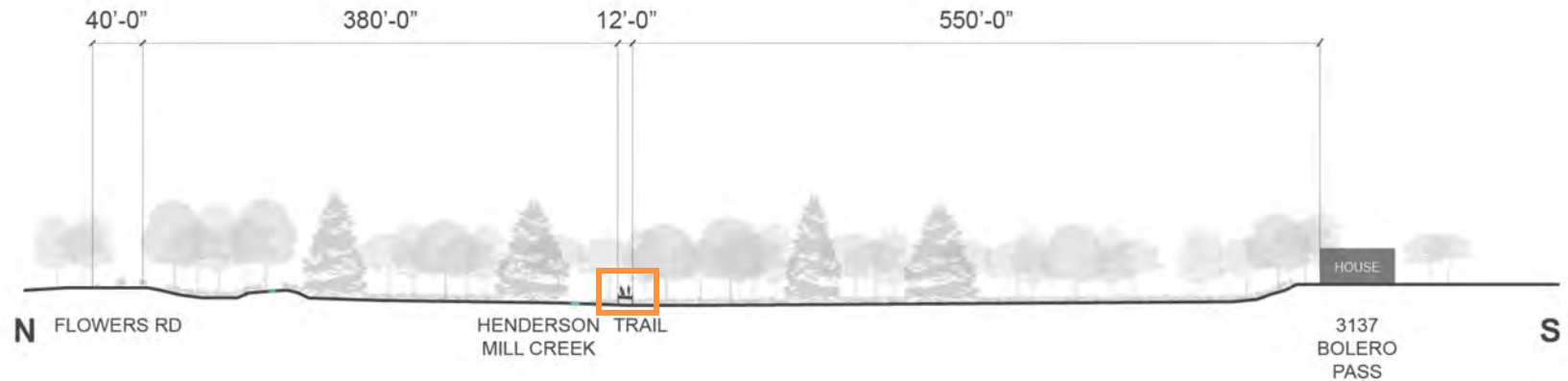


Proposed Trail Cross Section

Segment 1 - Bolero Pass Cross Section

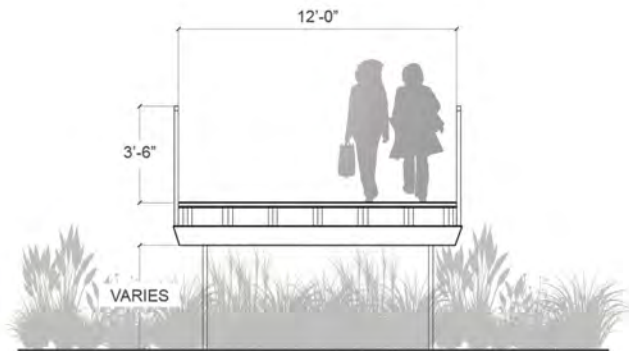


Trail Cross Section Enlargement

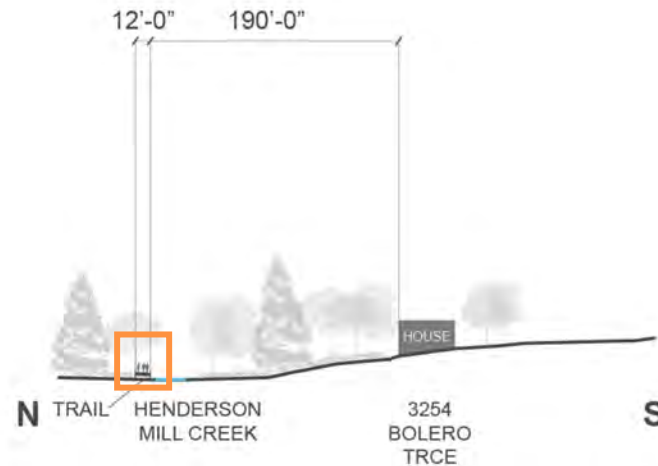


Proposed Trail Cross Section

Segment 1 - Bolero Trace Cross Section

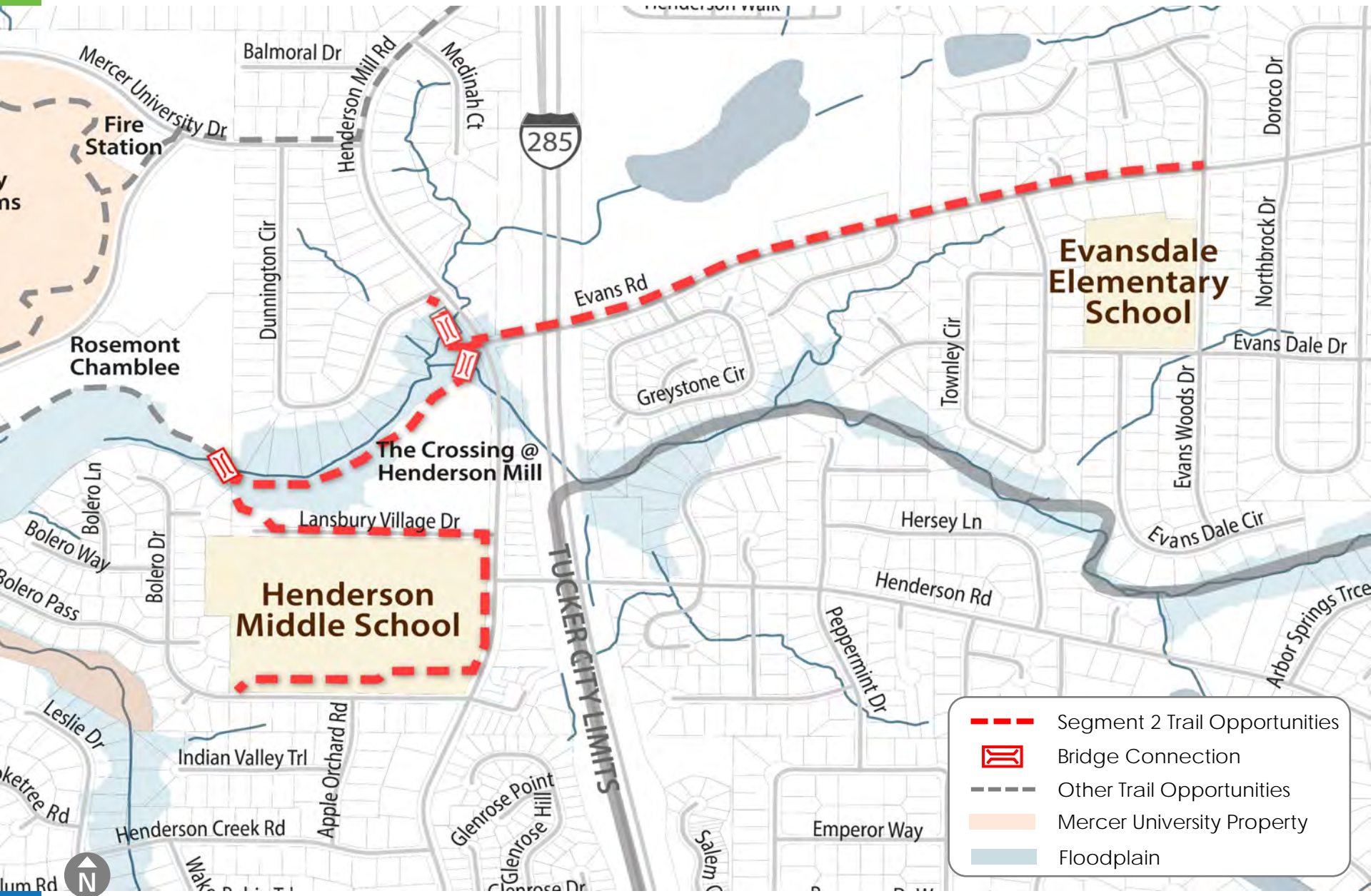


Trail Cross Section Enlargement



Proposed Trail Cross Section

Trail Opportunities – Segment 2



Segment 2 - The Crossing @ Henderson Mill



1 Greenspace north of The Crossing @ Henderson Mill

2 Lansbury Village Drive connection to Henderson Middle School



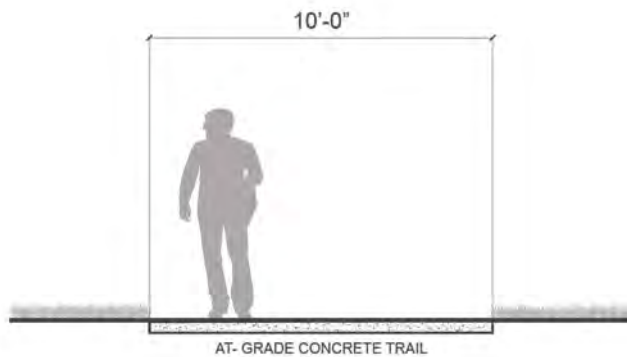
Segment 2 – The Crossing @ Henderson Mill - Existing



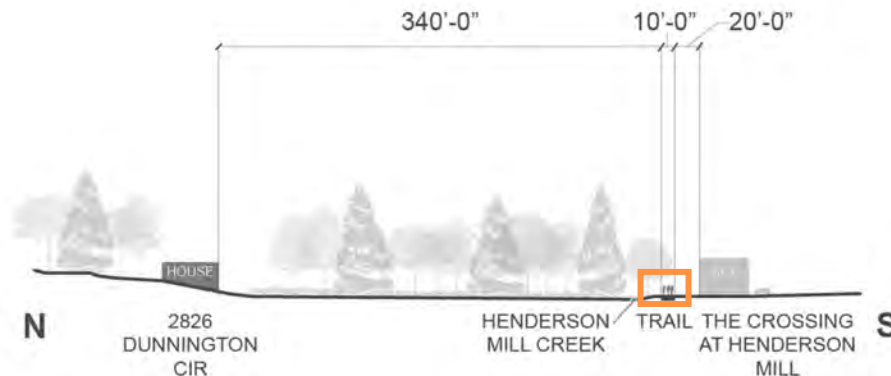
Segment 2 – The Crossing @ Henderson Mill - Proposed



Segment 2 - Dunnington Circle Cross Section



Trail Cross Section Enlargement



Segment 2 - Evans Road at Henderson Mill Road



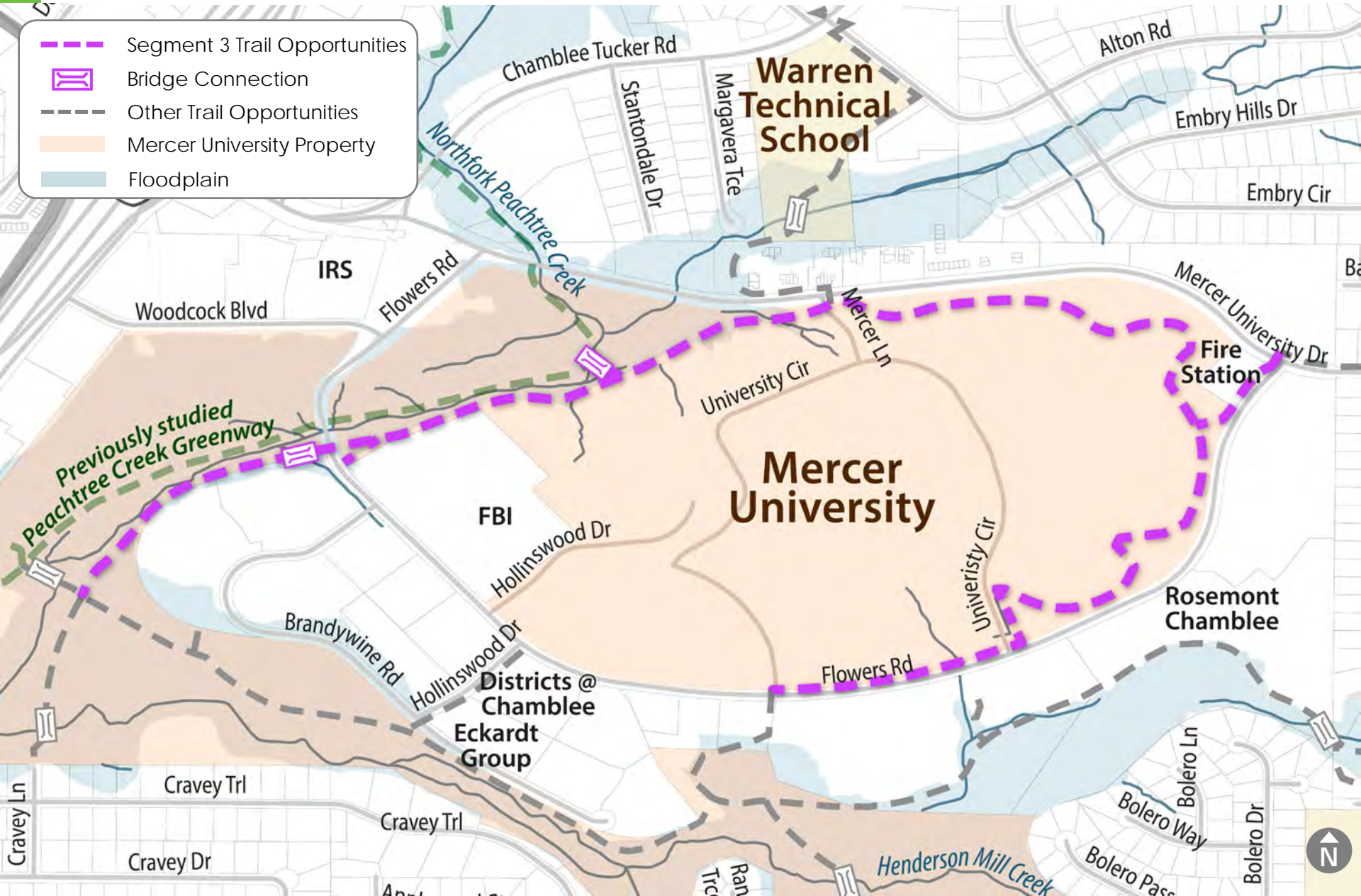
1 Sewer line leading up to Evans Road intersection



2 Evans Road at Henderson Mill Road looking east



Trail Opportunities – Segment 3



Mercer Urban Forest Study - Segment 3 (West)

----- Trail Opportunities

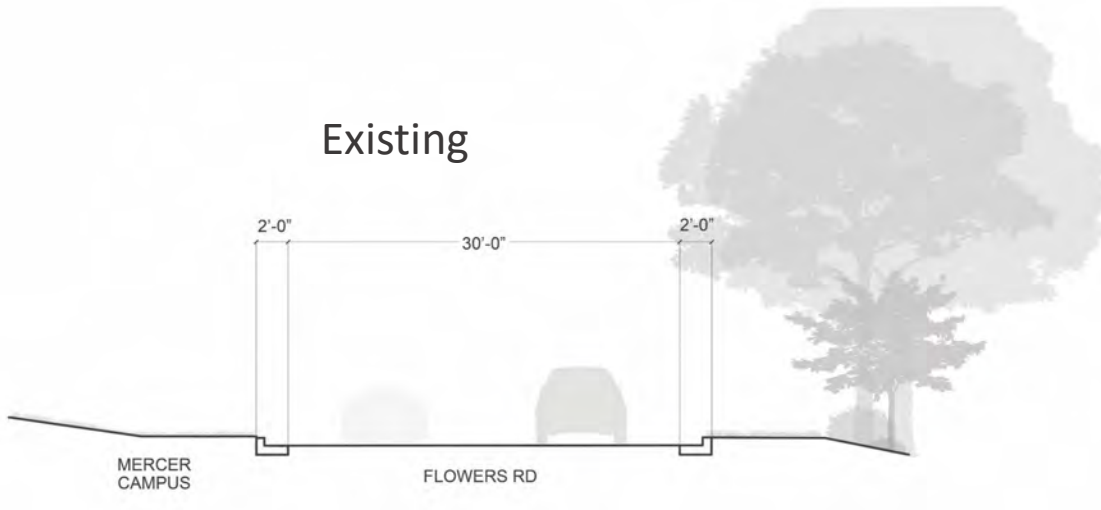


Mercer Urban Forest Study - Segment 3 (East)

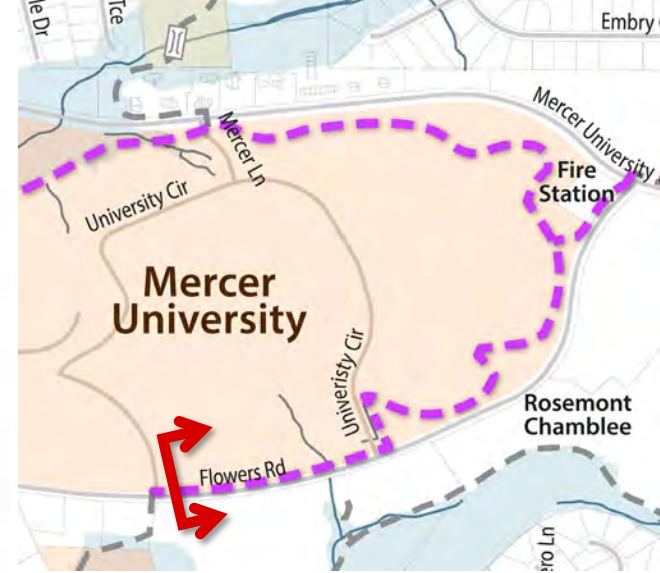
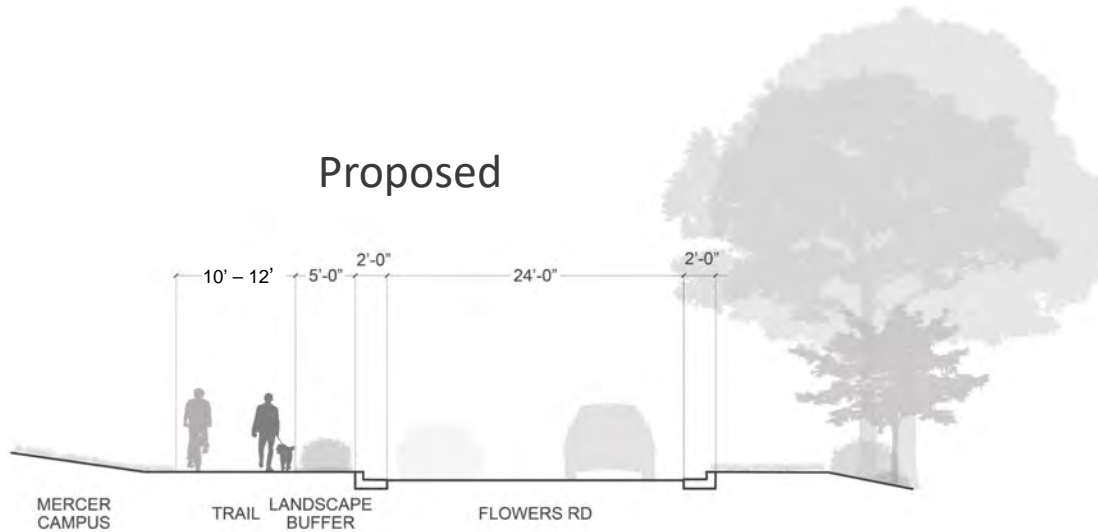


Segment 3 – Flowers Road Sidepath

Existing



Proposed



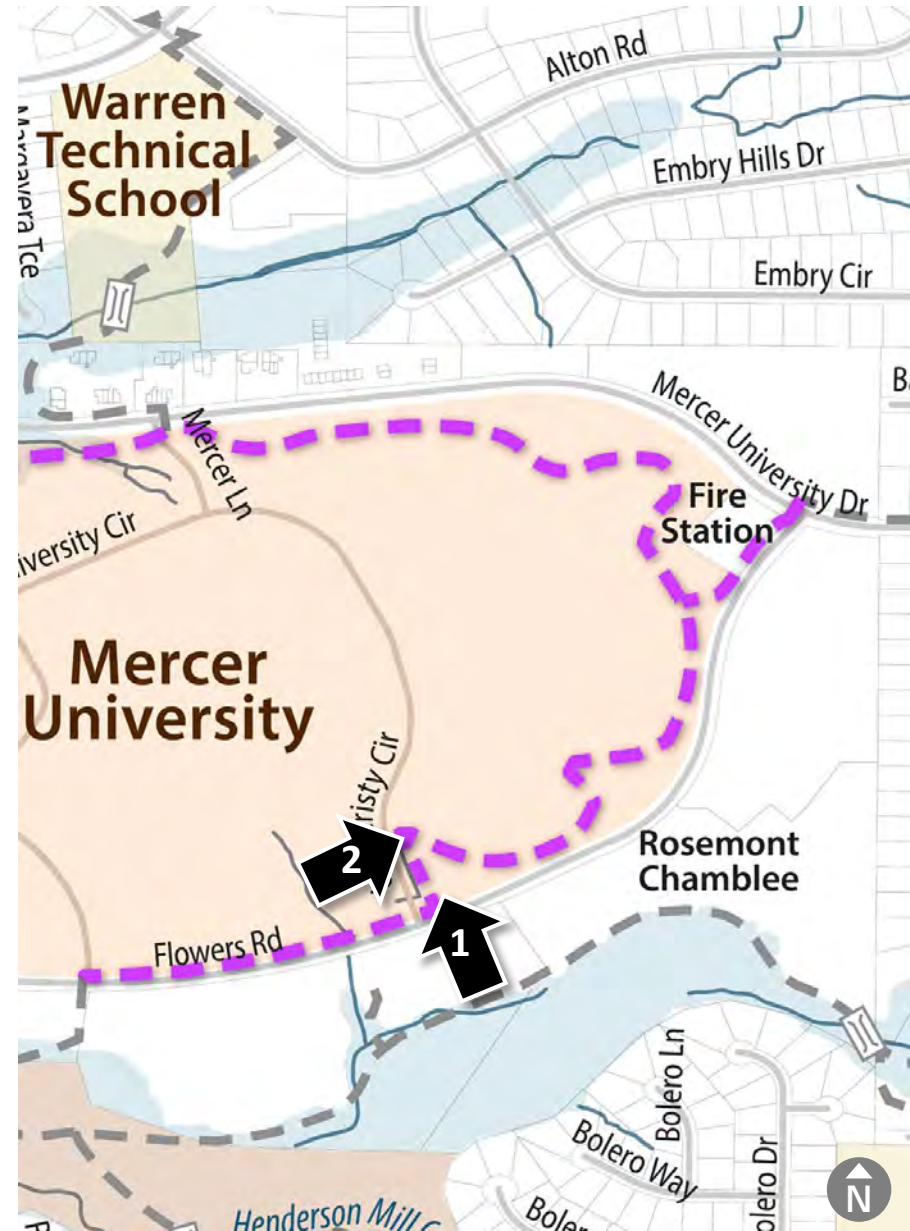
Flowers Road looking east

Segment 3 - University Circle to East Campus Loop

1 Landscape buffer east of University Circle

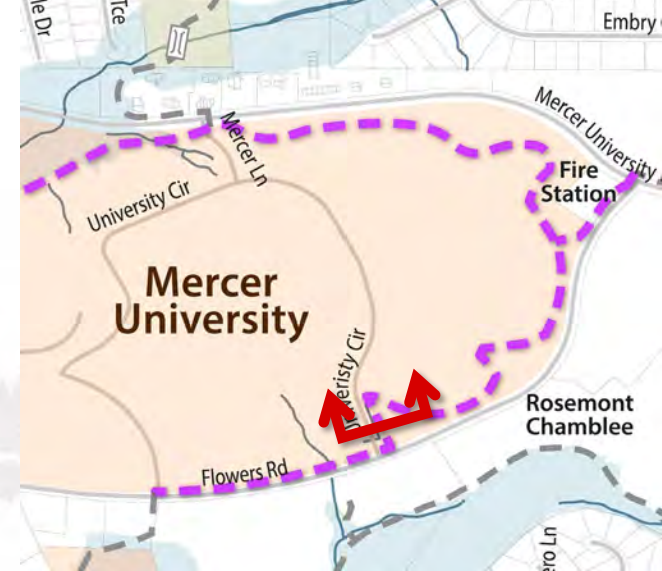
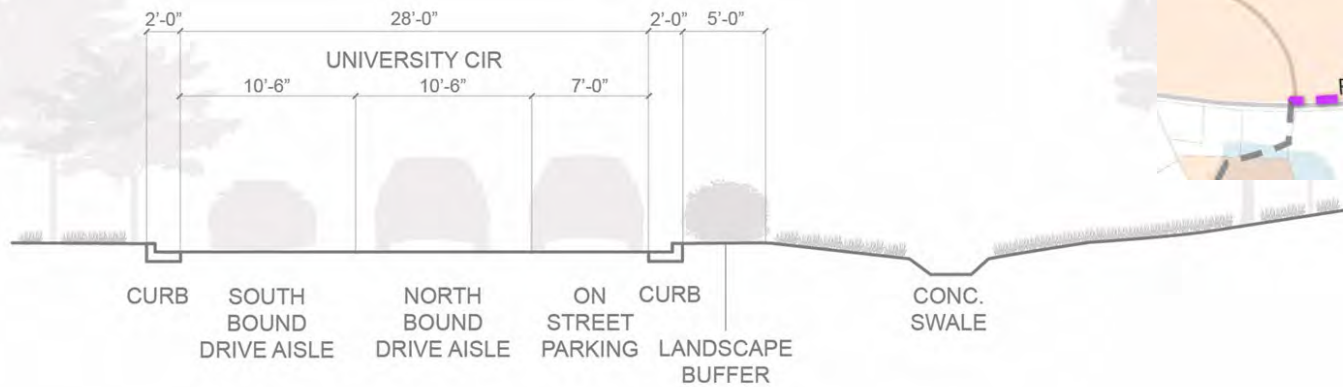


2 Existing bridge leading to nature trails

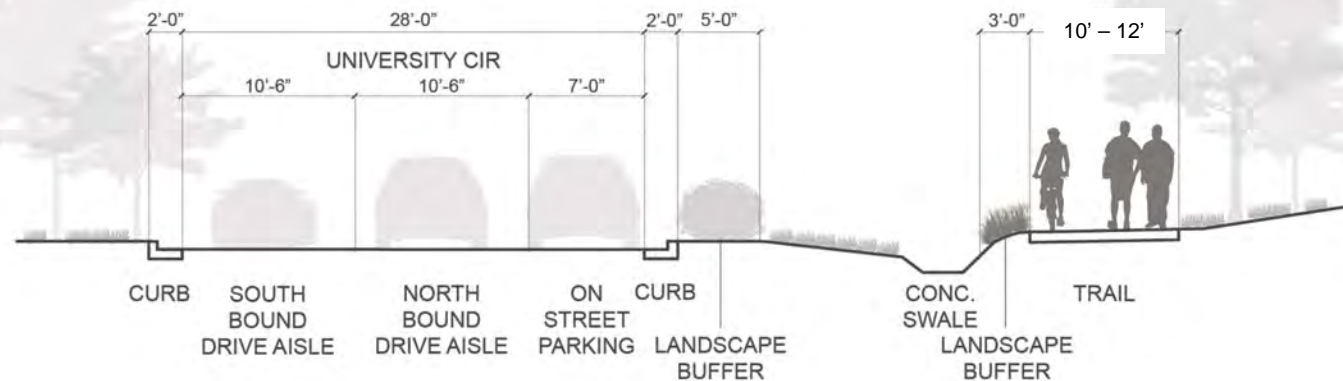


Segment 3 - University Circle

Existing



Proposed

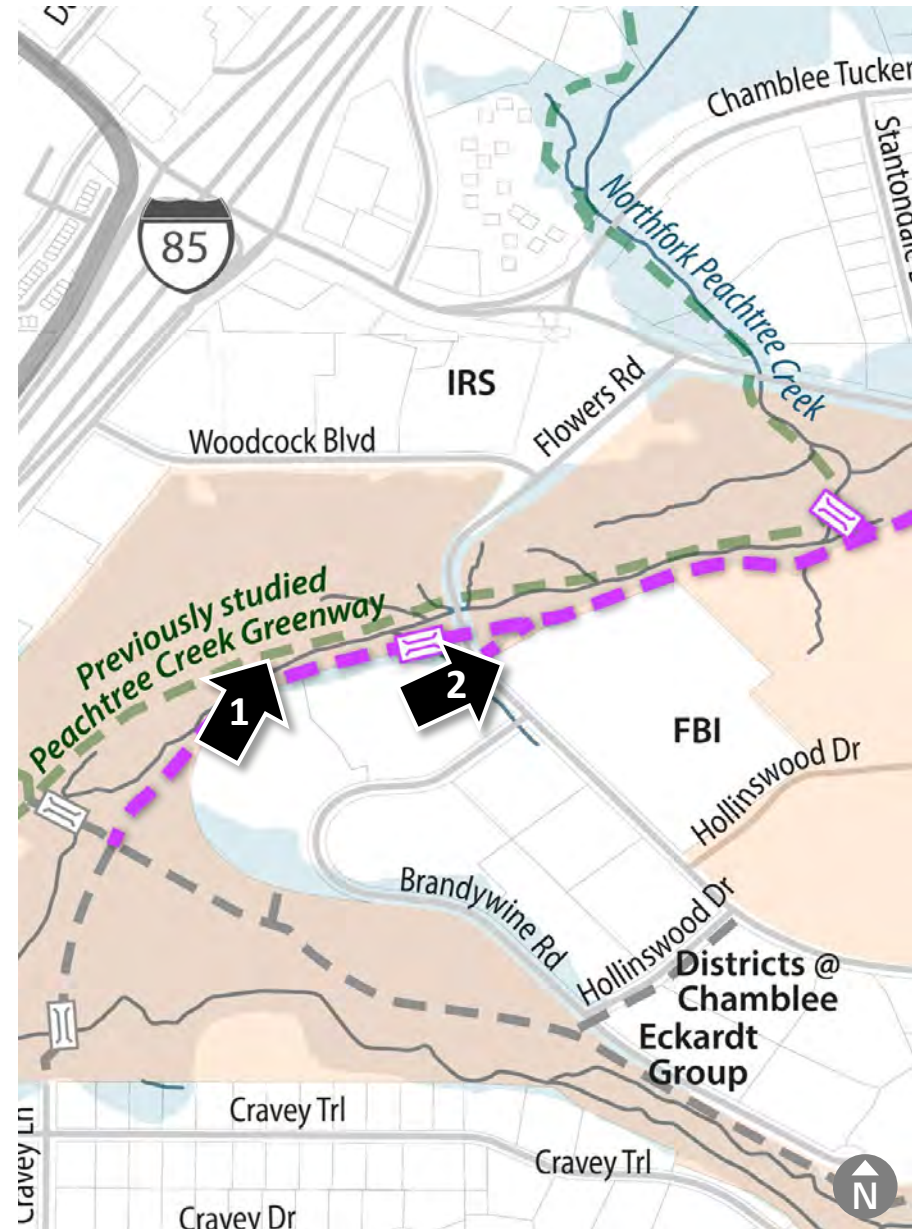


Segment 3 - Flowers Road at N. Peachtree Creek

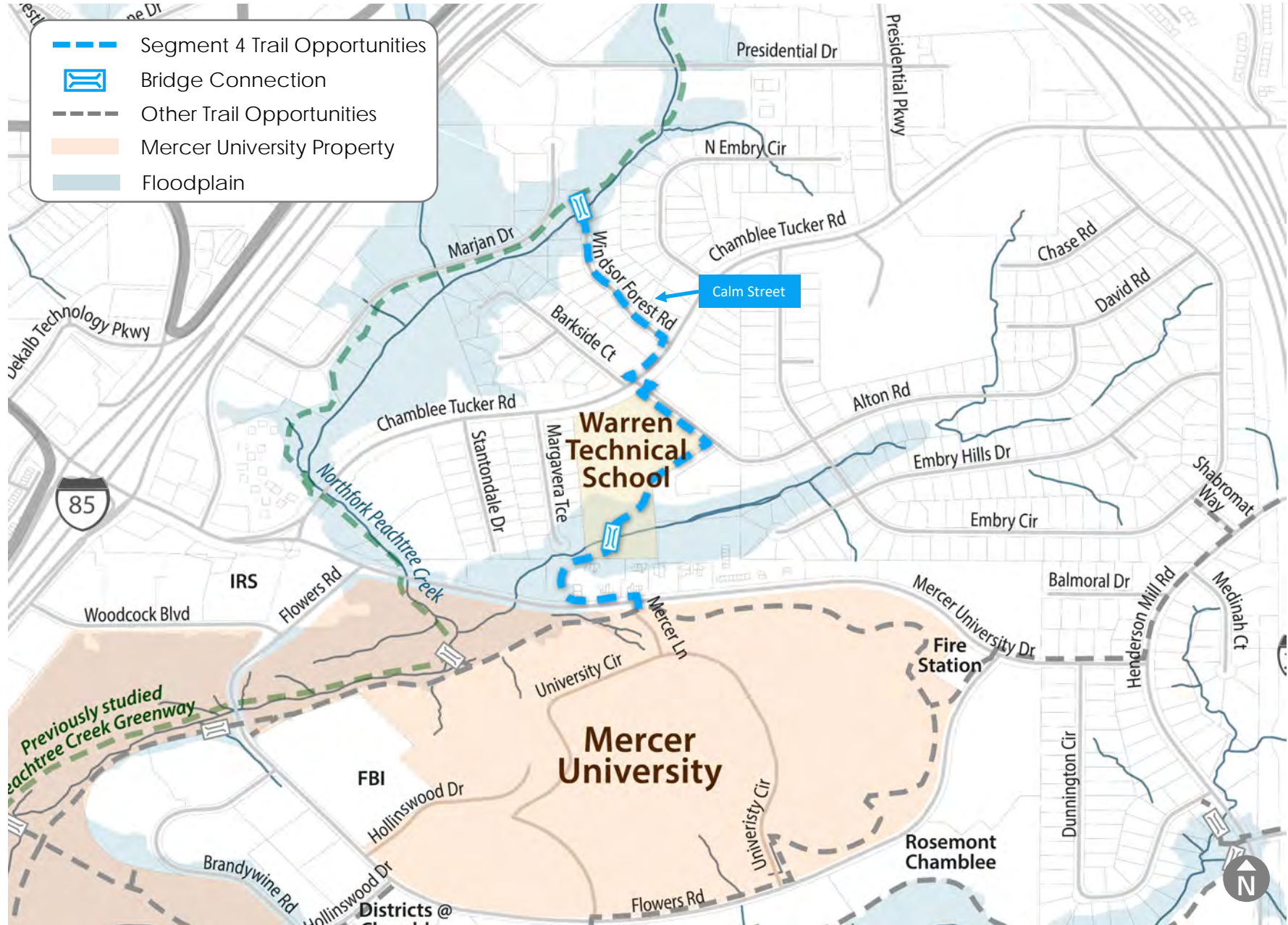
1 Flowers Road bridge at sewer line access point



2 Sewer line on south side of North Peachtree Creek



Trail Opportunities – Segment 4

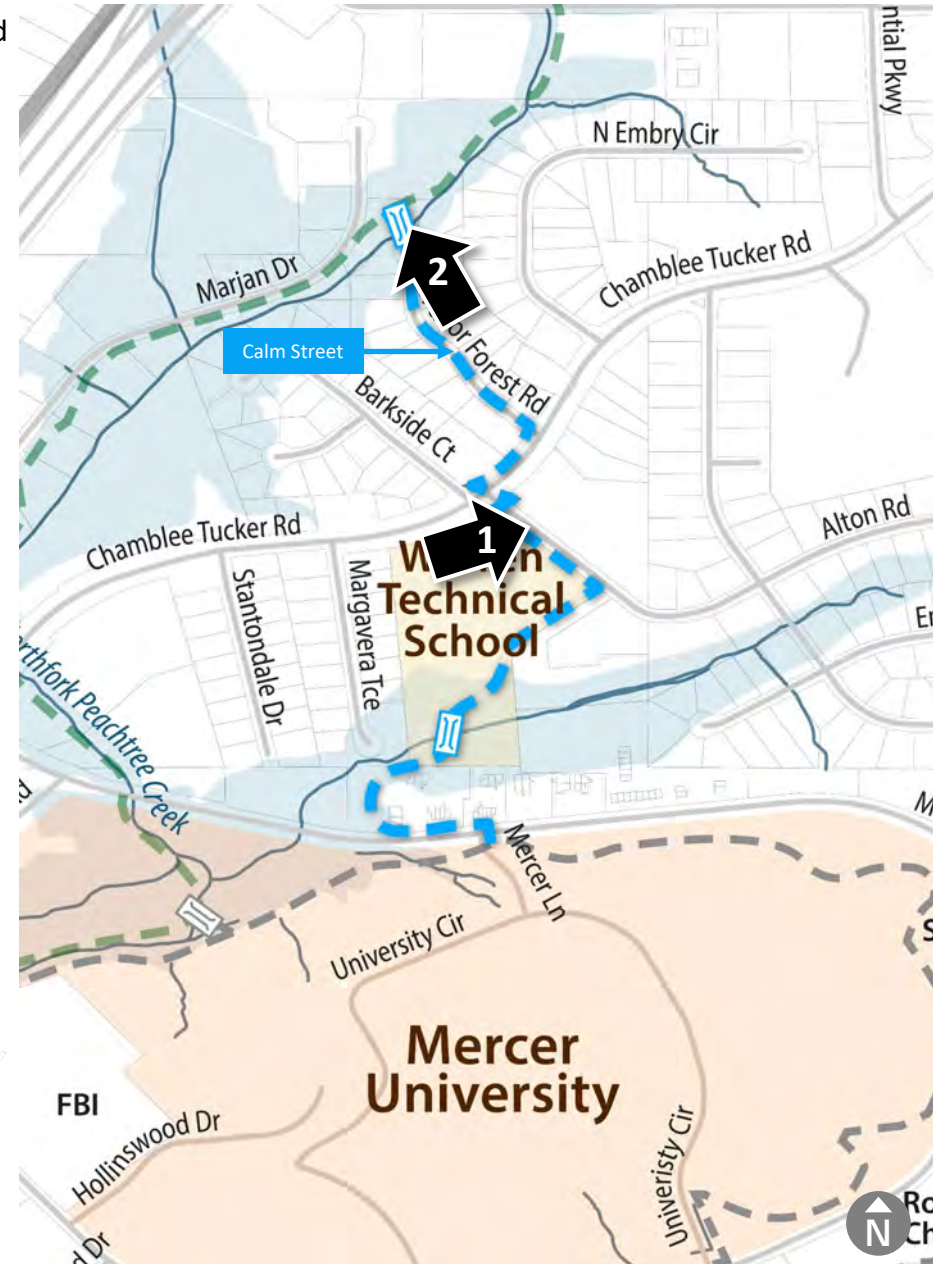


Segment 4 - Windsor Forest Calm Street

1 Intersection of Chamblee Tucker Rd, Barkside Ct, and Alton Rd



2 View of the end of Windsor Forest Road

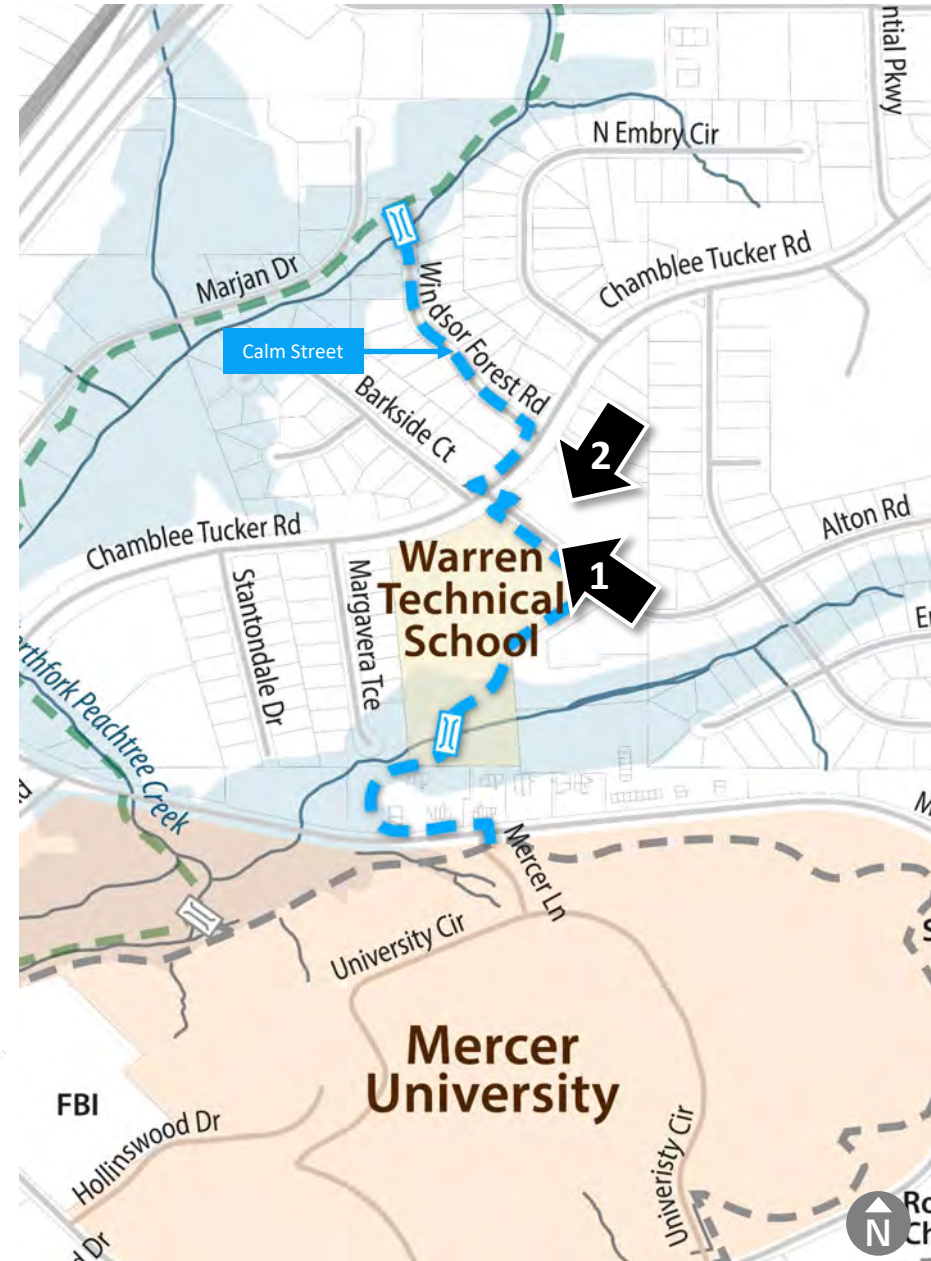


Segment 4 - Warren Technical School Connector

1 Alton Road looking east



2 Aerial view of Warren Tech School looking south

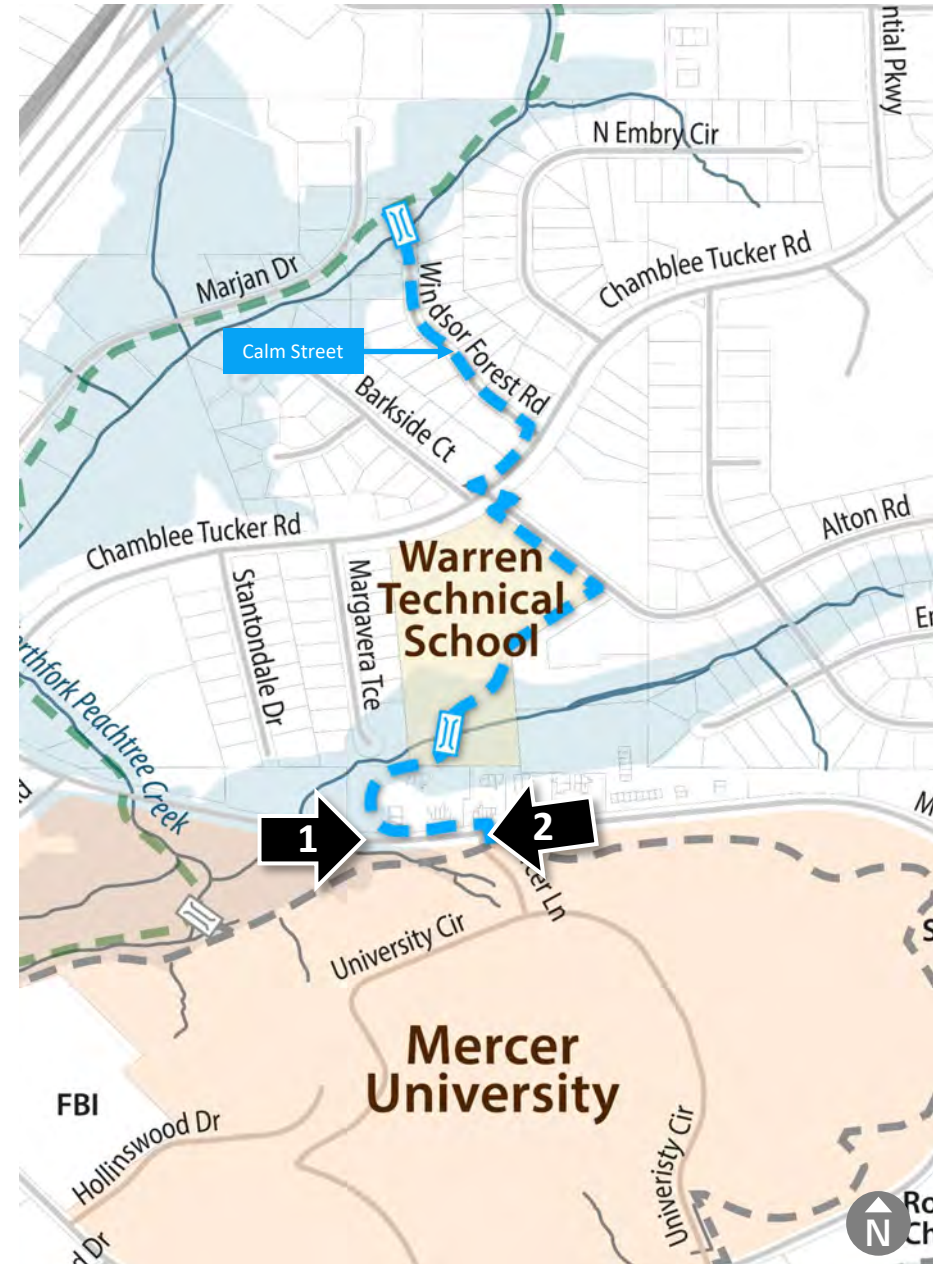
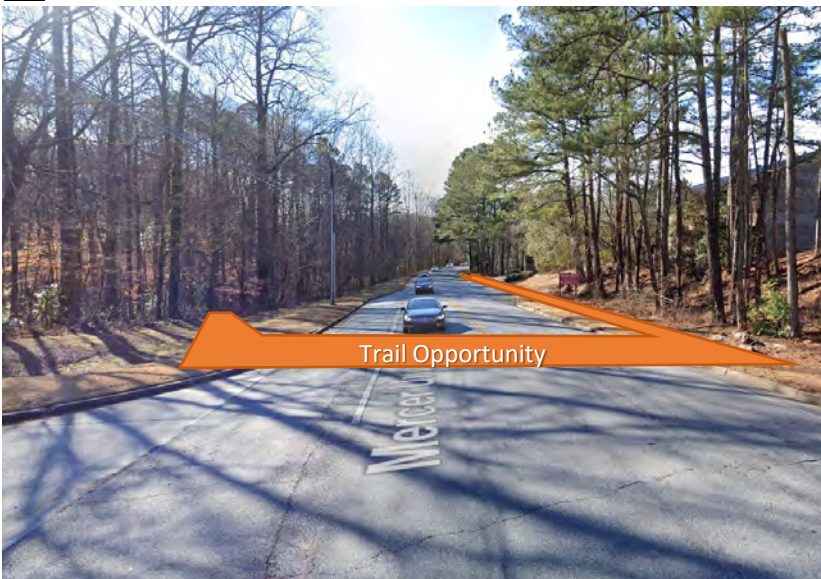


Segment 4 - Mercer University Drive

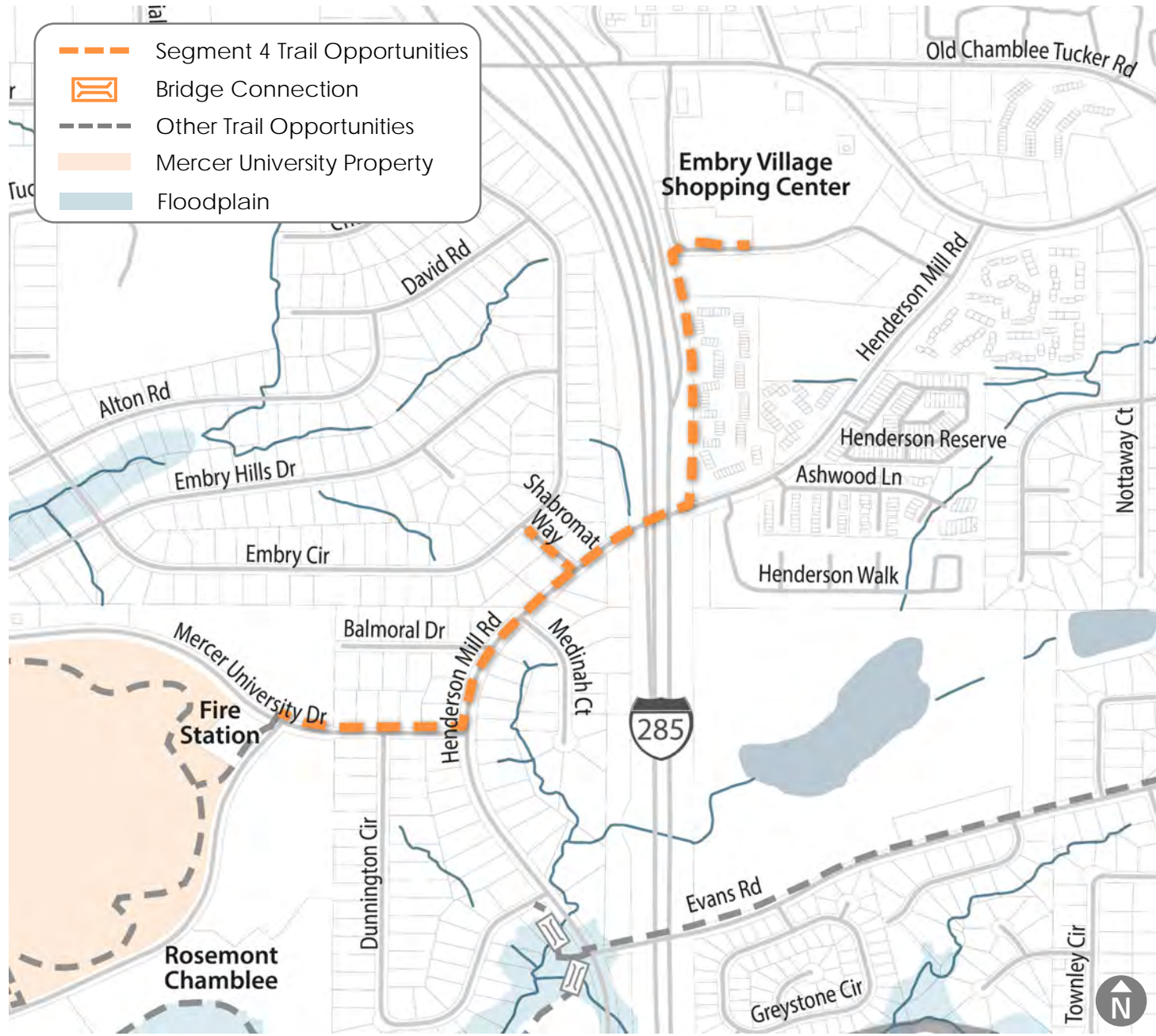
1 Entrance to Regent Centre office suites looking east



2 Mercer University Drive at Mercer Lane looking west



Trail Opportunities – Segment 5



Segment 5 - Embry Village Spur

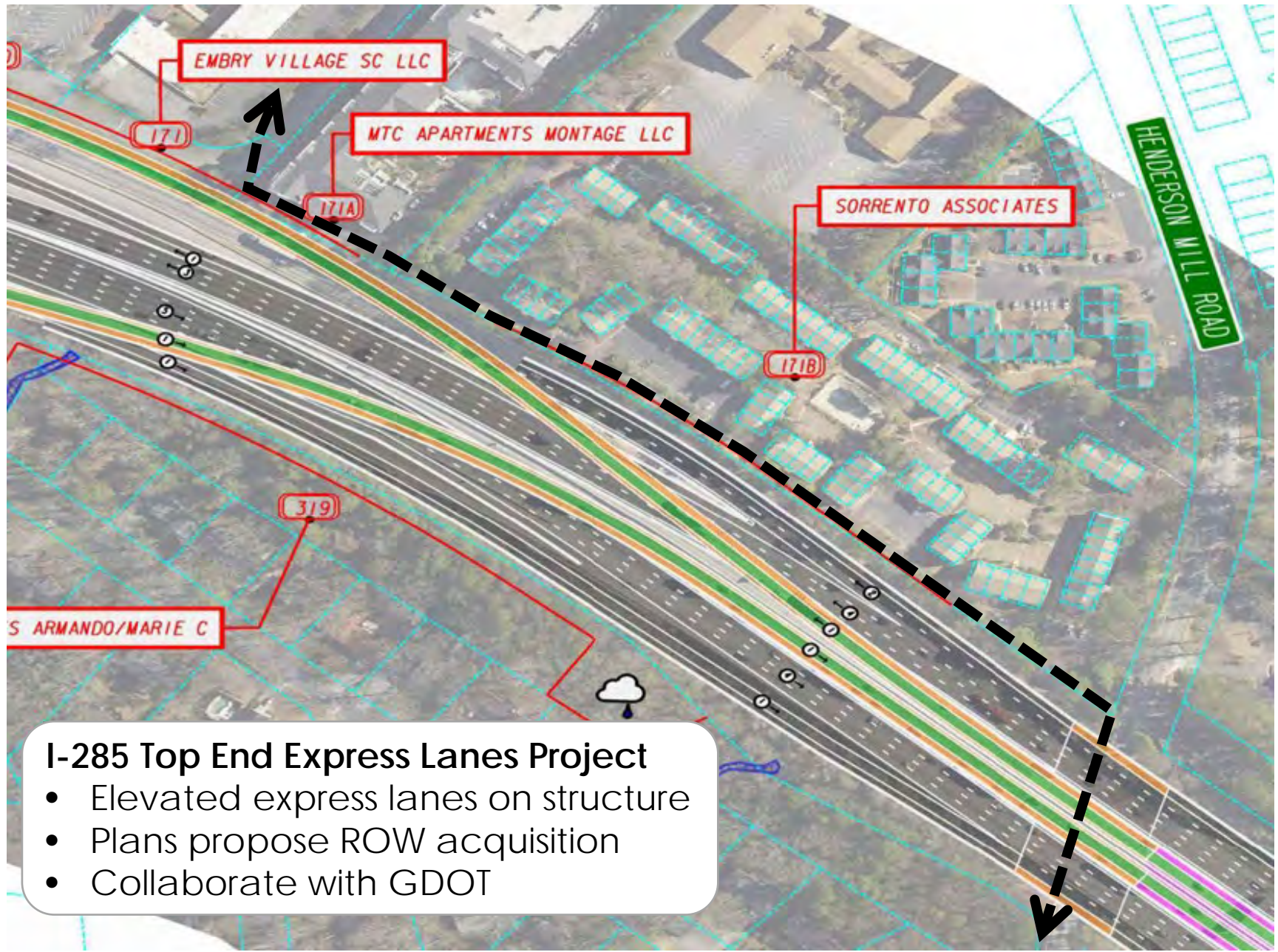
1 I-285 Bridge underpass



2 Aerial of alignment parallel to I-285



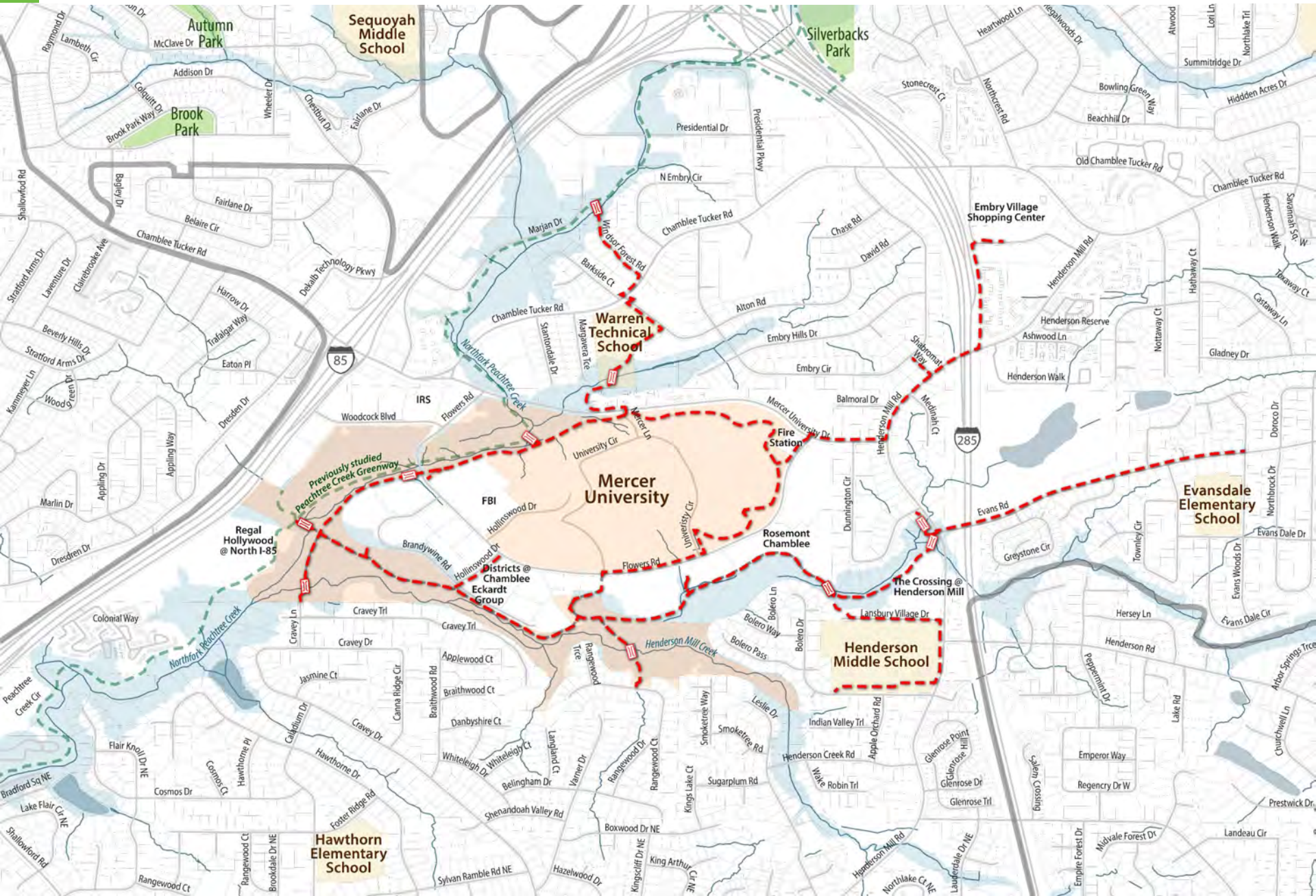
Segment 5 - Connection to Embry Village?



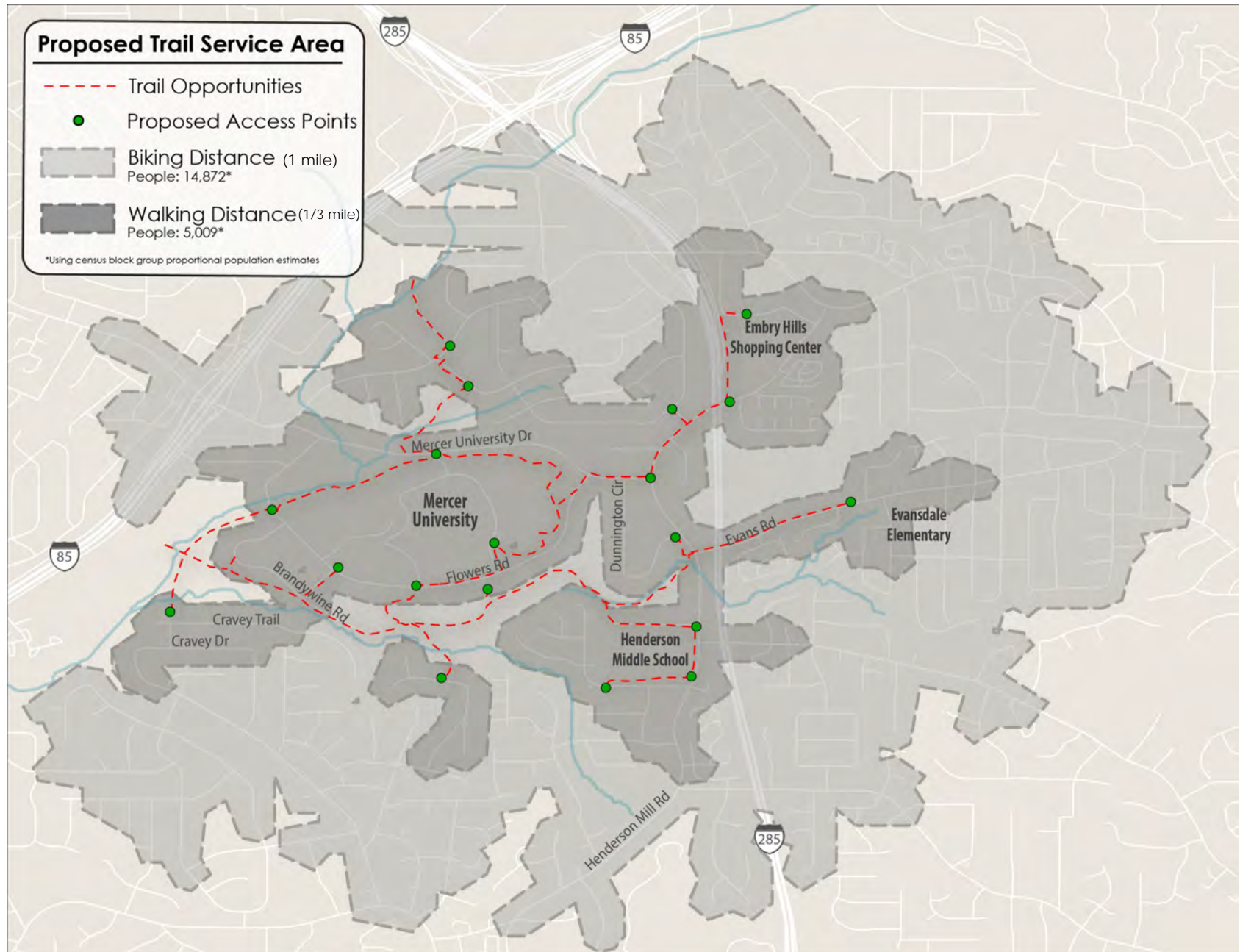
I-285 Top End Express Lanes Project

- Elevated express lanes on structure
- Plans propose ROW acquisition
- Collaborate with GDOT

Possible Trail Opportunities - Summary Map



>5,000 Potential Walkers, >14,000 Potential Bikers



5 | Concerns and Issues

Concerns Expressed in Survey and Emails

- Crime
- Privacy
- Floodplain
- Lighting
- Concrete
- Ecological impacts
- Aren't there better alternatives?

Crime

Many concerns about crime.

Dunwoody Chief of Police

"There has been no increase in violent crime near our trails."

DeKalb Police Majors

"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."



Crime – Interview with DeKalb Police Dept.

Apartment complexes

- “Target-rich” environments
- Property crimes mostly cars parked outside
- Personal crimes mostly of known people
- Officers do not expect an increase in crime from trails near apartments

Trail entrance spurs

- Opportunity for security infrastructure
- “Flock” cameras capture license plates
- “Fuchsia” cameras help if seniors get lost

School impacts

- Does not experience crime related to middle school with comings and goings of students – primary issues are inside school
- Kids may use the trails



Could a Trail Better Define this Area?



Privacy

Visual Privacy

- Average distance to trail is >1 football field
- Most residents won't see the trail.
- Dense underbrush and conifers may provide year-round privacy

Noise Privacy

- No expected increase in sound disturbance compared to baseline



Sensitive Areas and Top-Down Construction

Setting a 3" Pier for Elevated Structure

- Minimal clearing required, trees can be close to the trail edge
- Trail stays above flood elevation while wildlife, nutrients and water pass beneath
- Can be built without heavy machinery touching the ground



Aesthetics and Lighting

Is a trail a “Bike road”?

- 92% of users on a recent survey of Medlock Trail were walkers/runners
- Several had mobility challenges

Peachtree Creek Greenway (PCG)

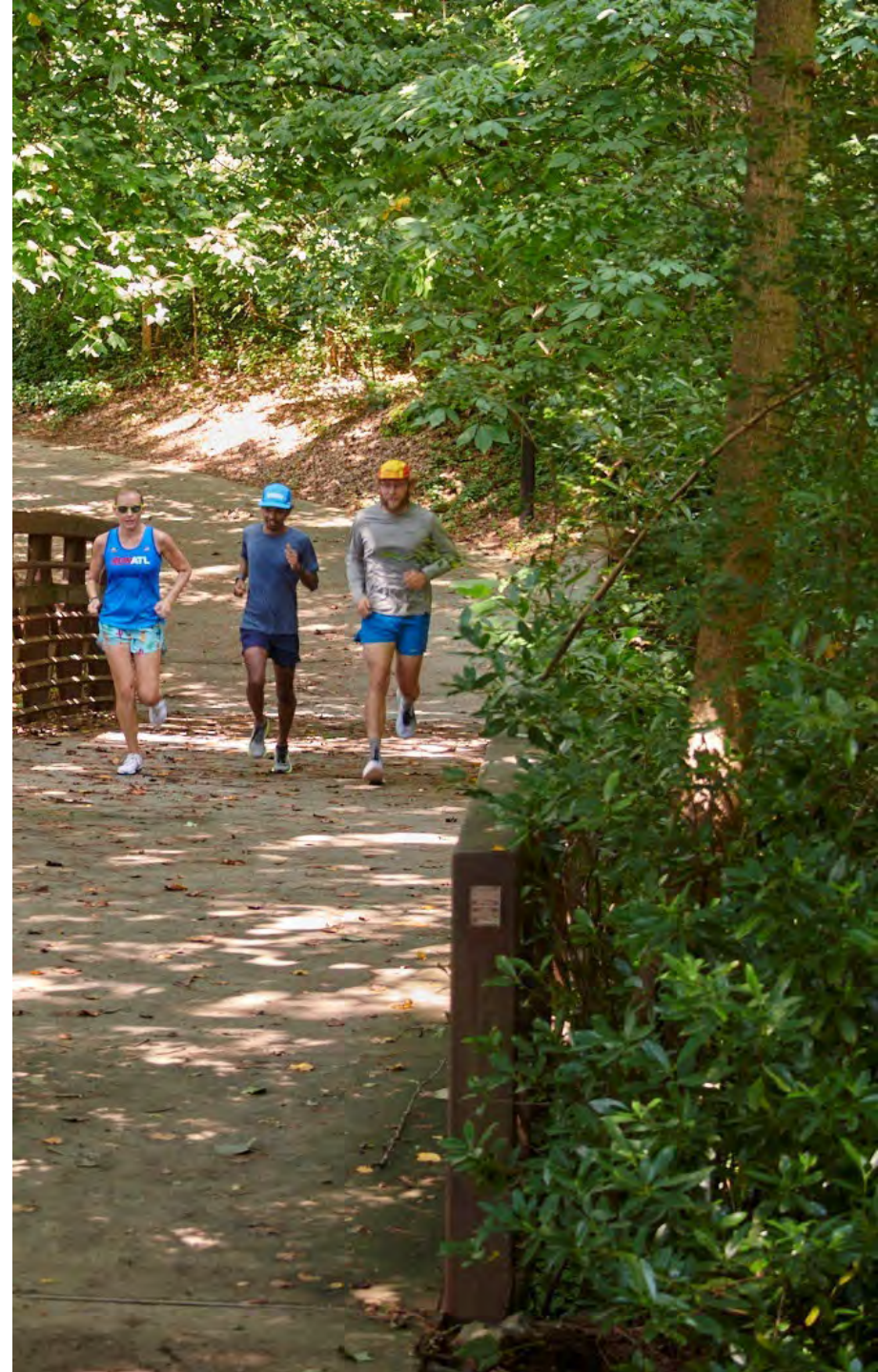
- Aesthetics were determined by City of Brookhaven
- Designed to look like urban park
- Planned along western edge of Mercer campus
- Mercer trails could be more natural (wait for Design Phase)

Lighting

- Most PATH trails are not lit, but PCG section could be
- Lighting would use “Dark Sky Design”

Landscaping

- Native mix could be used as a border instead of mowable grass

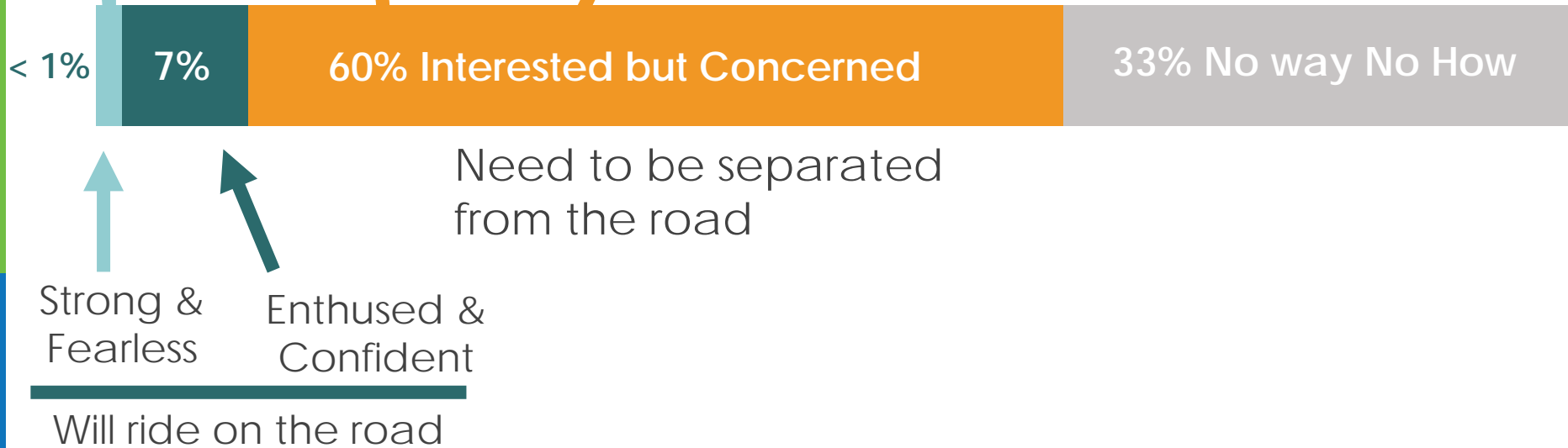


Concrete . . .

1. provides access for people using wheelchairs and walkers
2. is easy to maintain and long-lasting
3. does not have to be smooth, shiny and brightly striped. Pervious concrete, for example, has a rough look
4. can be designed to manage stormwater run-off



Greenways Attract Intergenerational Users



Trails Make Ecology Fun



Photo courtesy of Philadelphia Media Network



Photo courtesy of Tualatin Hills Nature Park

- Invasives and development are biggest threats to native species
- Humans are still learning how to be part of ecology.
- Ecologically sensitive trails educate humans who can then support natural areas.
- PATH works with arborists and ecologists to maximize value to natural areas

Our Neighbors Need Our Awareness



Mercer Urban Forest Study and Trails



Looking Ahead

- Consolidate feedback and update the Study October 2023
- **Public Meeting #3: Trail Study Updates + Q&A** **November 2, 2023**
- Finalize the Study November 2023
- Submit for political approvals January 2024
- If approved, proceed to design March 2024
- Public meeting to review design September 2024?
- Finalize design and submit for funding October 2024?

A green-tinted photograph of a wooden boardwalk winding through a forest. Two people, a man in a red shirt and a woman in a grey shirt, are walking away from the camera on the boardwalk. The text "Q & A" is overlaid in white in the center of the image.

Q & A

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

tmatttox@dekalbcountyga.gov

Subject = Mercer Trail Study