

# DOUGLAS COUNTY TRAIL STUDY

**July 22, 2024**

Prepared by:

 **PATH** FOUNDATION.org  **KAIZEN** COLLABORATIVE





# **DOUGLAS COUNTY TRAIL STUDY**

Approved by Board of Commission:  
July 22, 2024

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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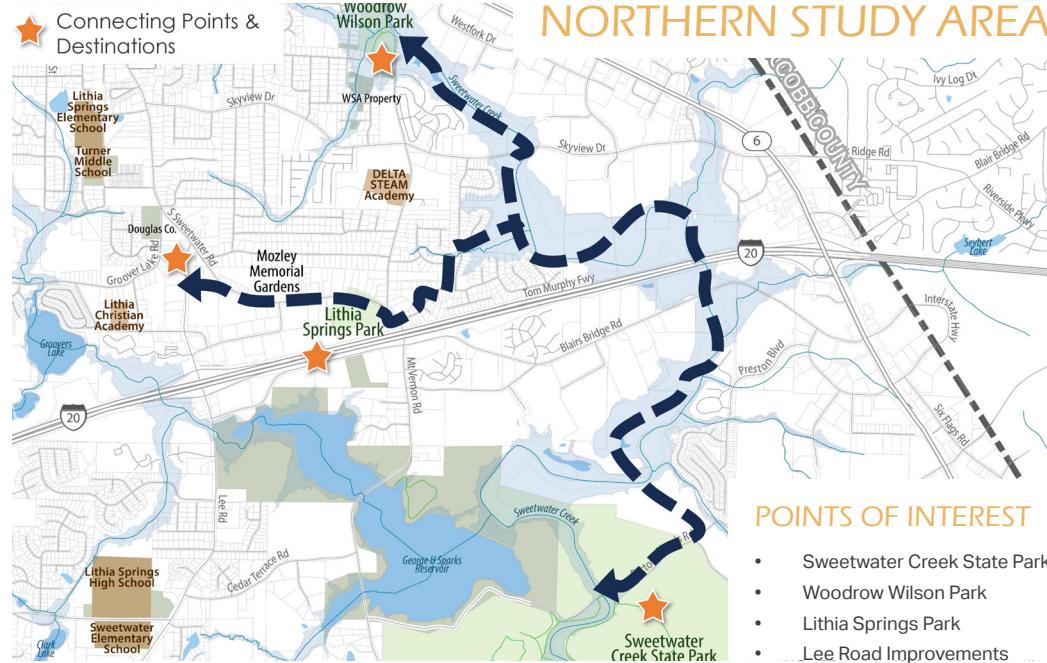
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# INTRODUCTION

Multi-use trails are making outdoor activities with friends and family, and alternative transportation easier, safer, and more enjoyable. Douglas County is seeing an increasing demand for trails by residents of all ages based on recently conducted planning efforts including the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Douglas County Strategic Plan, the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the Comprehensive Transit Plan, and the Comprehensive Parks & Rec plan. To start the initiatives of building more trails, in Spring 2024, Douglas County Planning and Zoning Department contracted with the PATH Foundation and KAIZEN Collaborative team to conduct a feasibility study for multi-use trails in two defined study areas: **The Northern Study Area** primarily follows the Sweetwater Creek corridor from Woodrow Wilson Park to the Sweetwater State Park; **The Southern Study Area** includes the Dog River Library to the Little Bear Creek Natural Preserve.

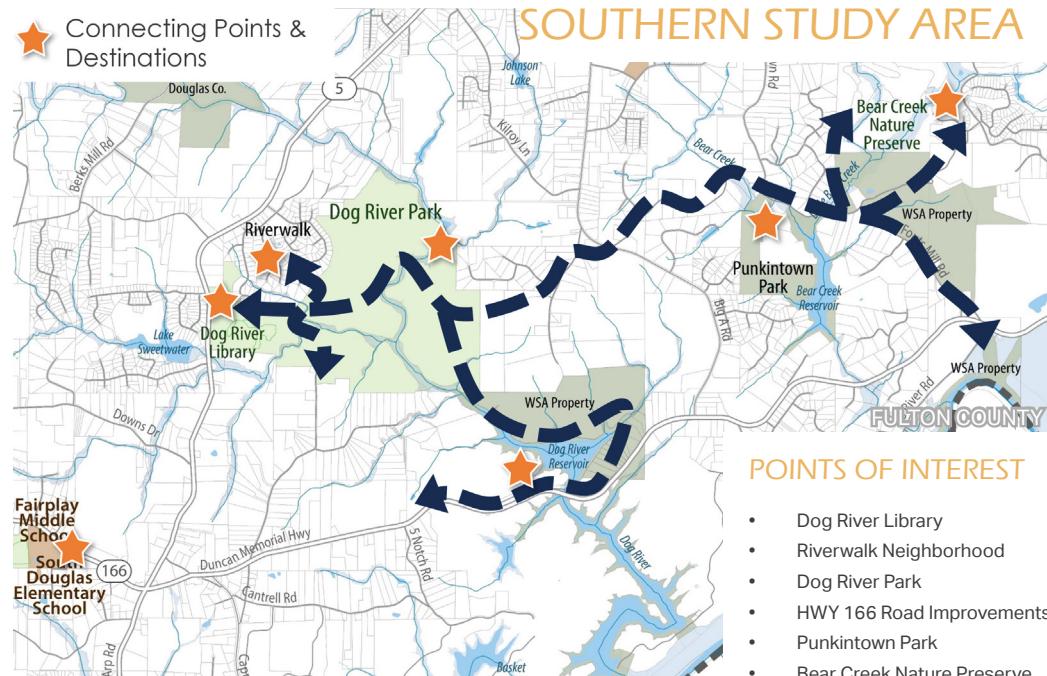
The greenspace that follows and surrounding the waterways is the key to achieving the goal of the trail network, which is to provide a safe and inviting trail network for all Douglas County residents to access natural settings and destinations.



## NORTHERN STUDY AREA

### POINTS OF INTEREST

- Sweetwater Creek State Park
- Woodrow Wilson Park
- Lithia Springs Park
- Lee Road Improvements



## SOUTHERN STUDY AREA

### POINTS OF INTEREST

- Dog River Library
- Riverwalk Neighborhood
- Dog River Park
- HWY 166 Road Improvements
- Punkintown Park
- Bear Creek Nature Preserve

## TRAIL TYPES

The greenspace that follows and surrounding the waterways is the key to achieving the goal of the trail network, which is to provide a safe and inviting trail network for all Douglas County residents to access natural settings and destinations.

### GREENWAYS

Multi-use greenways are the most desirable trail type as they are the most inviting – farthest away from vehicular traffic and in beautiful natural settings. Greenways are built in parks, along streams, or through undeveloped land. They are typically 12-ft wide (10 ft is minimum), hard surfaced, and use design and construction specifications that follow regulations from the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO).



Greenway Trail Example: South River Trail, DeKalb County, Georgia



Greenway Trail Example: Peachtree Creek Greenway, Brookhaven, GA

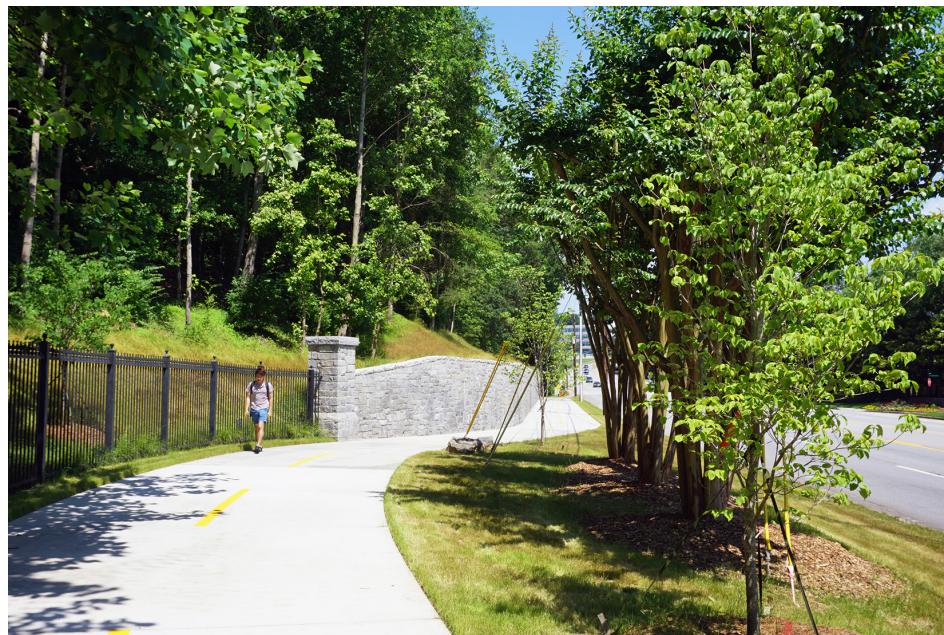


Cross Section of a Greenway

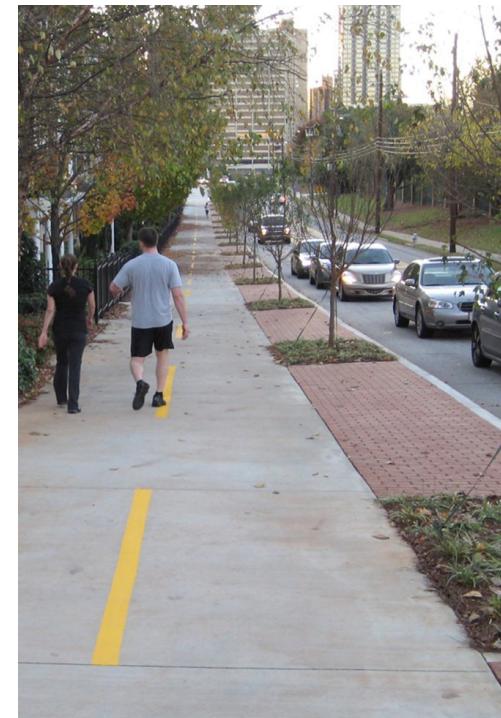
Not all areas within the study areas present opportunities for a greenway trail within natural settings, therefore, two other types of facilities are proposed to connect destinations and the greenways.

## SIDEPATHS

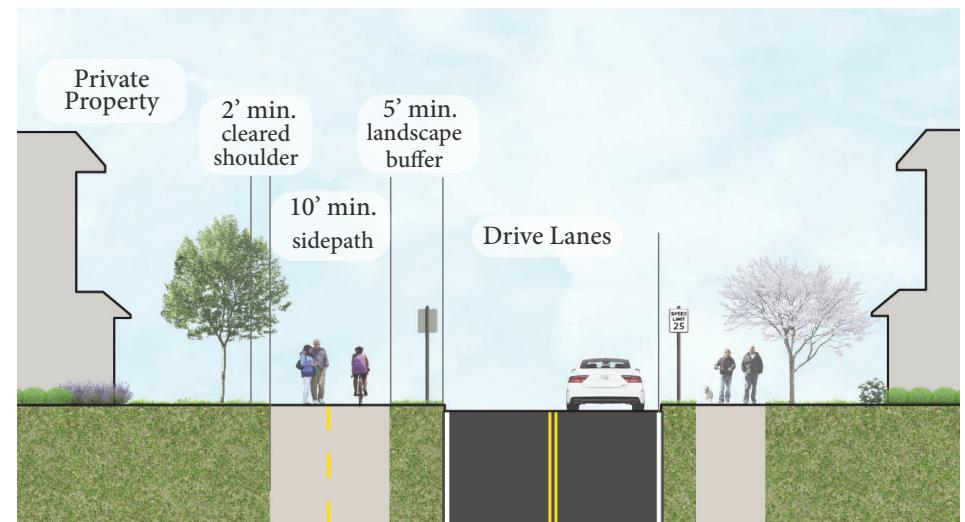
Sidepaths should have ample landscape buffers (minimum 5 ft from the back of the curb) and generally should not be built in a straight line as curvature lends itself to a more natural feel and can allow the trail design to bob and weave through the urban environment. Sidepaths are typically 10-ft to 12-ft wide and are designed as multi-use facilities where pedestrians and bicycle riders share the trail, most often marked with a center lane to distinguish direction of travel. A landscape buffered sidepath creates a much more pleasant walking and biking environment for trail users, but it also beautifies roadways and keeps them from being seas of monotonous linear asphalt and concrete. Sidepath design needs to carefully consider on-street markings, signage, and illuminated warnings to alert drivers to the presence of trail users coming from two directions.



Example of a sidepath in DeKalb County, Georgia



Sidepath on the Stone Mountain Trail on Highland



Sidepath typical section

## SHARED STREETS

When greenways, sidepaths, and cycle tracks are not possible, as is often the case in single-family suburban neighborhoods, shared streets can offer some protection to trail users and provide valuable connections to the broader trail network. Shared streets are located where both traffic volumes and speeds are low; they are designed in collaboration with neighbors to give priority to pedestrians and bicycle riders. Key design components of shared streets proposed in this study include:

- Signs and Pavement Markings: easy to see and sufficiently frequent to keep users on the trail;
- Speed Management: speed cushions or similar to physically slow vehicles down while providing space for cyclists to pass through;
- Minor Street Crossings: focus more on stopping crossing vehicles than on requiring bicycles to stop;
- Major Street Crossings: HAWK signals or rapid flashing beacons at mid-block crossings; traffic stop conditions at intersections.



Example of a sidepath in Dunwoody, Georgia



Example of a sidepath in DeKalb County, Georgia



Example of a gravel sidepath

# TRAIL STUDY PROCESS

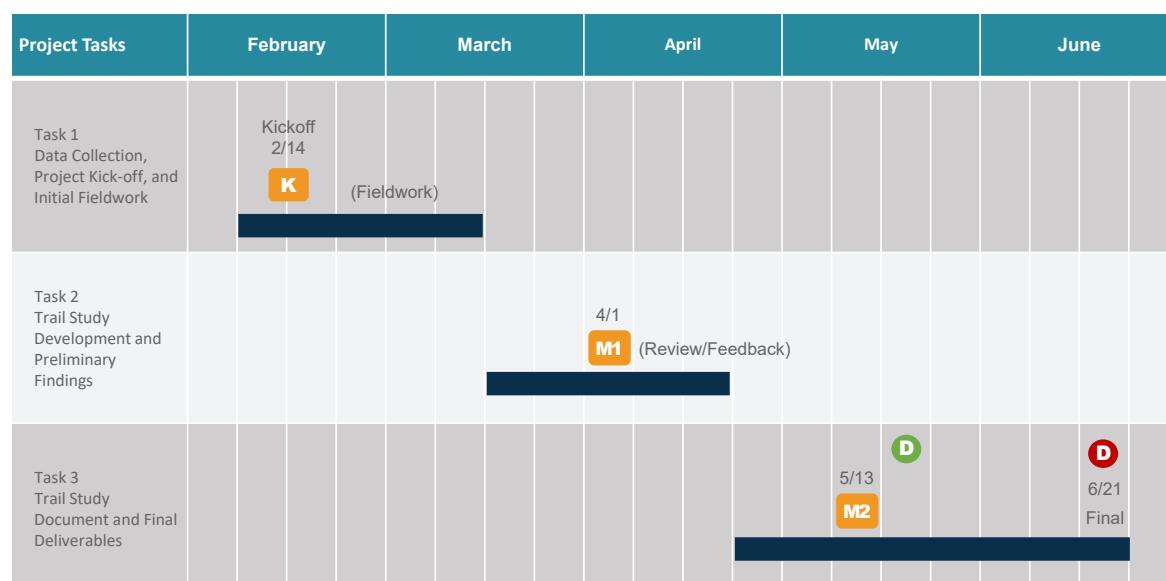
The study kicked off in February 2024 with data collection and the formation of a working group to guide the planning efforts. The working group consisted of representatives from Douglas County, City of Douglasville, Douglasville-Douglas Water Sewer Authority, Cobb & Douglas Public Health, Southern Conservation Trust, and citizens of the county. County Planning & Zoning Department directed the planning effort, and the PATH team led the meetings and prepared presentations for the working group.

As study input, the PATH team reviewed previously proposed plans and relevant on-going roadway projects. The study areas and connecting goals are determined at the kick-off meeting and further presented along with preliminary findings to the working group in a meeting in April. The County Planning & Zoning Department managed posting the meeting and related materials on the county website and kept the information updated throughout the process. All collected feedback from the public and the working group was discussed and revisions

were made to then lead to the draft study plan. The draft study plan was presented at the second working group meeting in May. Revisions to the preliminary alignments, segments, cost projections, and recommended model project were discussed during the meeting. The working group had a final meeting in June after receiving the draft report document for the County to solicit any final comments for the report before finalizing.

## TRAIL STUDY FINDINGS

This study has identified a total of 18.5 miles of multi-use trails and neighborhood shared-use streets in the two study areas. The proposed network is broken down into several segments based on logical terminations and connecting points. The numbers presented in the report are working numbers only and do not imply order of implementation. The following pages present each segment in detail.



Task

### Meeting Legend:

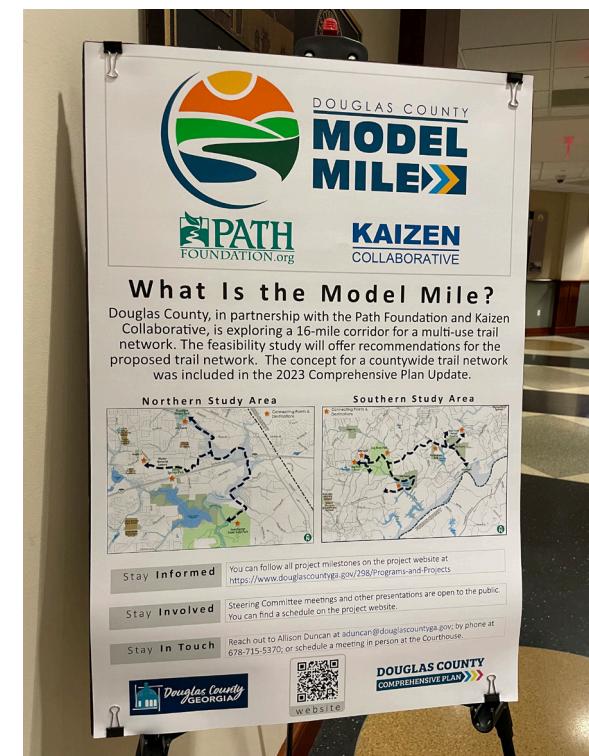
K Kick-off Meeting

M Working Group Meeting

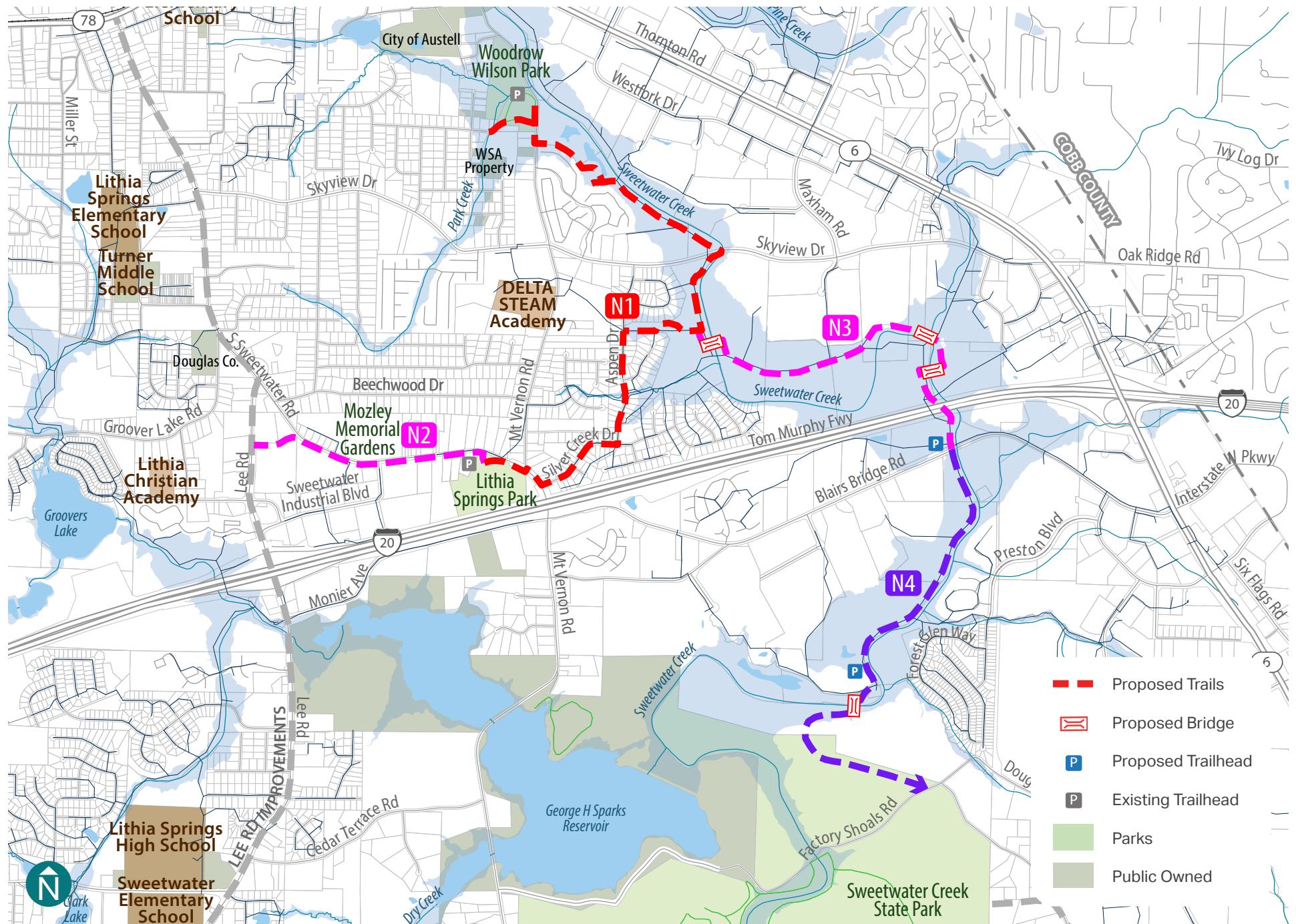
### Deliverable Legend:

D Review Submittal

D Final Deliverable



## NORTHERN STUDY AREA



Distance:

2.4 miles

Connecting Destinations:

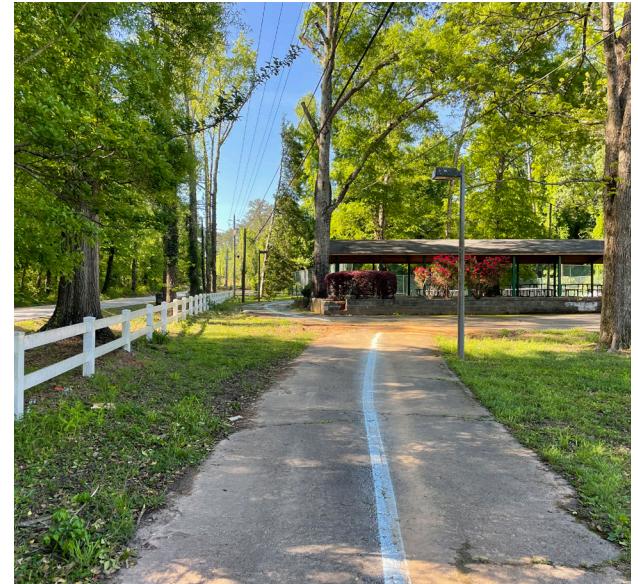
- Woodrow Wilson Park
- Lithia Spring Park

Connecting two parks with easy access to parking, restroom facilities, and park amenities at both ends, Segment N1 offers the opportunity to many residents within a walking distance to use the trail as a means to get to their park, get exercises, or simply to be outdoor with friends and family. N1 consists of an approximately 1.6-mile greenway trail which is proposed as a linear park extension from the County's existing parks and offers many recreational opportunities and ecological benefits.

Segment N1 begins at the southeast corner of Woodrow Wilson Park westward and southward. Pavement upgrades, signage, and striping will be applied to update the existing trails to a safer and fresher condition. A spur connection to Windsor Drive is proposed to utilize the greenspace within park property and connect many single-family residents directly to the park.



Picture behind apartment buildings



Picture of existing trail, a guy wire needs to be relocated to ensure enough vertical clearance on trails



Picture of apartment amenities

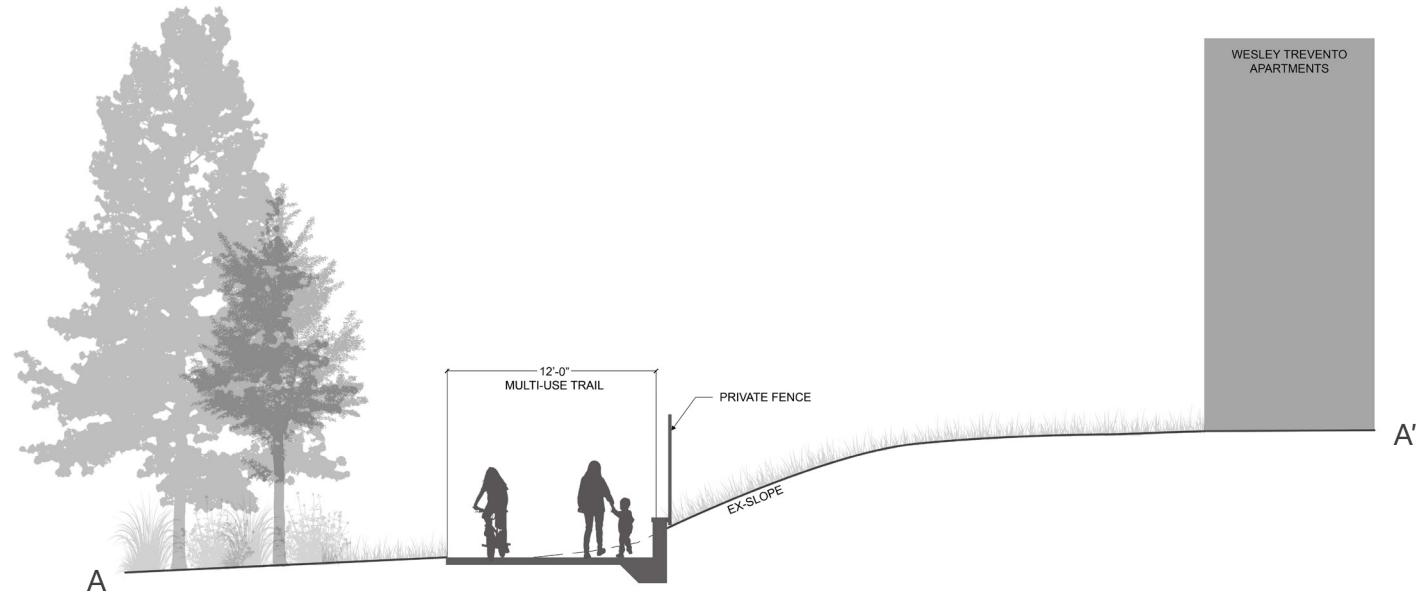
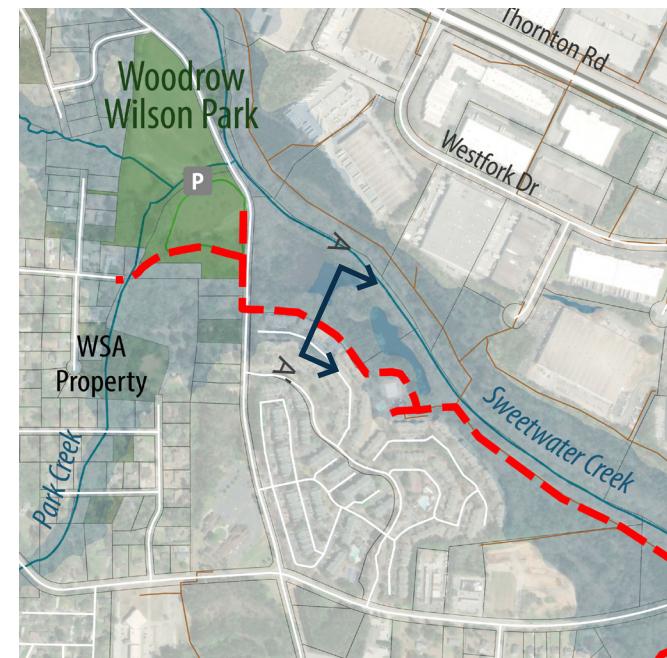


Picture of sewer corridor

N1



As the trail heads south from the park, it will become a sidepath along Mt. Vernon Drive where a flat shoulder within the right-of-way exits. A raised speed table with Rapid Flashing Beacon signals at the trail crossing is proposed to calm traffic and provide a safe crossing condition. The trail crosses Mt Vernon Road to enter the back side of the Wesley Trevento Apartments complex, where the trail aligns with the edge of the wooded area while kept distance from the row of apartment building. A small seat wall can be used at the edge of trail as needed. As the trail travels east, a secured trail access is proposed near the northwestern corner of the apartment's amenity area. Coordination with the Apartment and the property owner should be conducted during design and prior to construction of this segment to further develop details for the direct connection to the complex, security, and potential landscaping areas along the greenway. The trail then continues east to enter the sewer easement corridor where it follows the sewer corridor and parallel to the Sweetwater Creek to Skyview Drive.



Cross section behind Wesley Trevento Apartments

At Skyview Drive, this study proposes approximately 50LF bridge structures leading to the underpass to go over an existing drainage swale, which contains a high amount of sandy silts suggesting flood evidence. The elevated trail structure will transition to a 12' wide concrete trail that aligns with the east-face inner bank supporting Skyview Drive Bridge. An upper and lower side retaining wall system will be utilized as the trail passes under the road bridge until grades allow a return to a standard at-grade concrete trail on the south side. A construction access is identified north of the Skyview Drive bridge on the west side of creek to support the construction of trail structures for this underpass. This access can be built as a future trail connection up to Skyview Drive and continue as a side path along the road to commercial areas.



Picture under Skyview Drive underpass

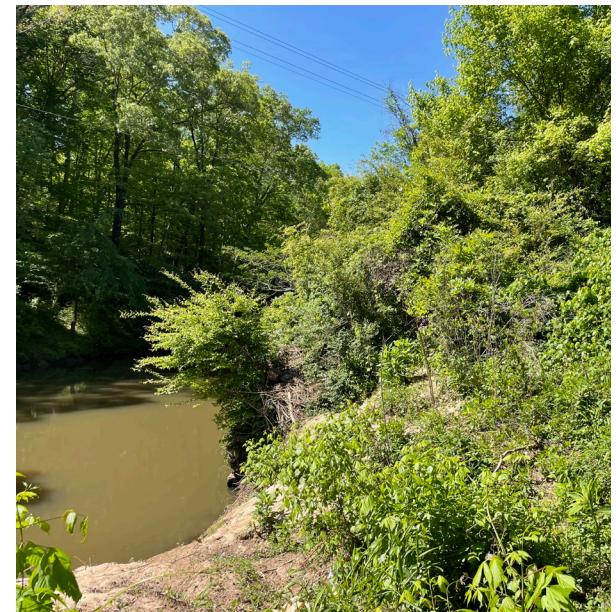
On south side of Skyview, the trail enters into a large greenspace set aside from a development – Silver Creek Branch. This property is currently owned by the Homeowner Association and has the County sewer easement running through the creek side with a spur connects to Aspen Drive. The proposed trail is to align mostly with the sewer easement, while deviate out to avoid wet / drainage areas as illustrated on the map.

N1's greenway will end at Aspen Drive, where it becomes a shared-use street along Aspen. The street has well maintained sidewalks on both sides and some speed humps to control traffic. Additional traffic calming measures and wayfinding signages can be added based on further assessment of traffic speed/volume during design and additional engagement with the property owner/management. The



Picture under Skyview Drive underpas

shared-use street continues to Silver Creek Drive and ends at Mt Vernon, where a section of sidepath is proposed to connect trail users to the signalized intersection of Mt Vernon and S Sweetwater. The trail makes across the road at the signal and becomes a sidepath in the Lithia Springs Park to connect to the existing parking lot.



Picture of Sweetwater Creek under Skyview Drive underpass

## N2 LEE ROAD CONNECTION

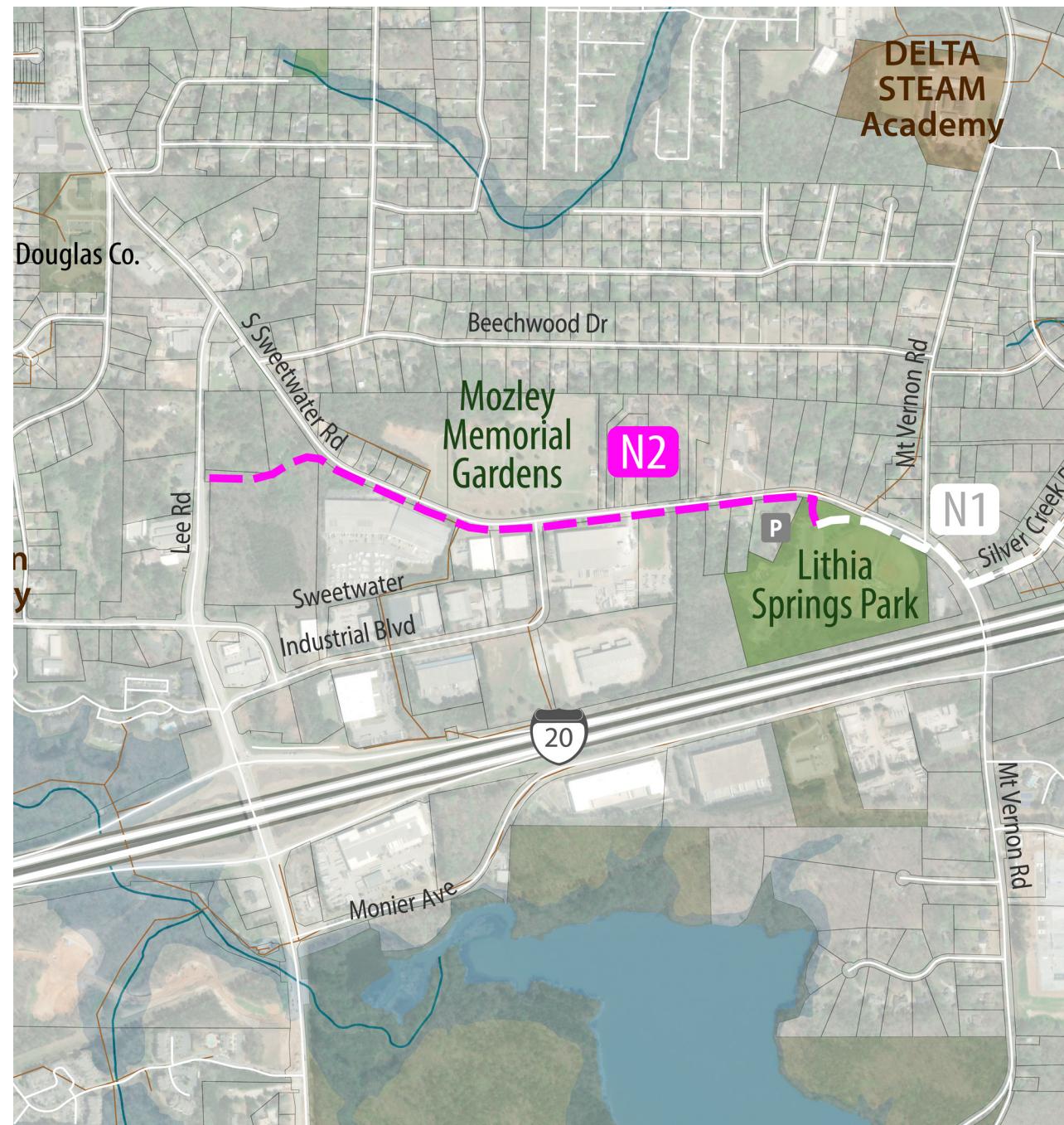
Distance:

0.8 miles

Connecting Destinations:

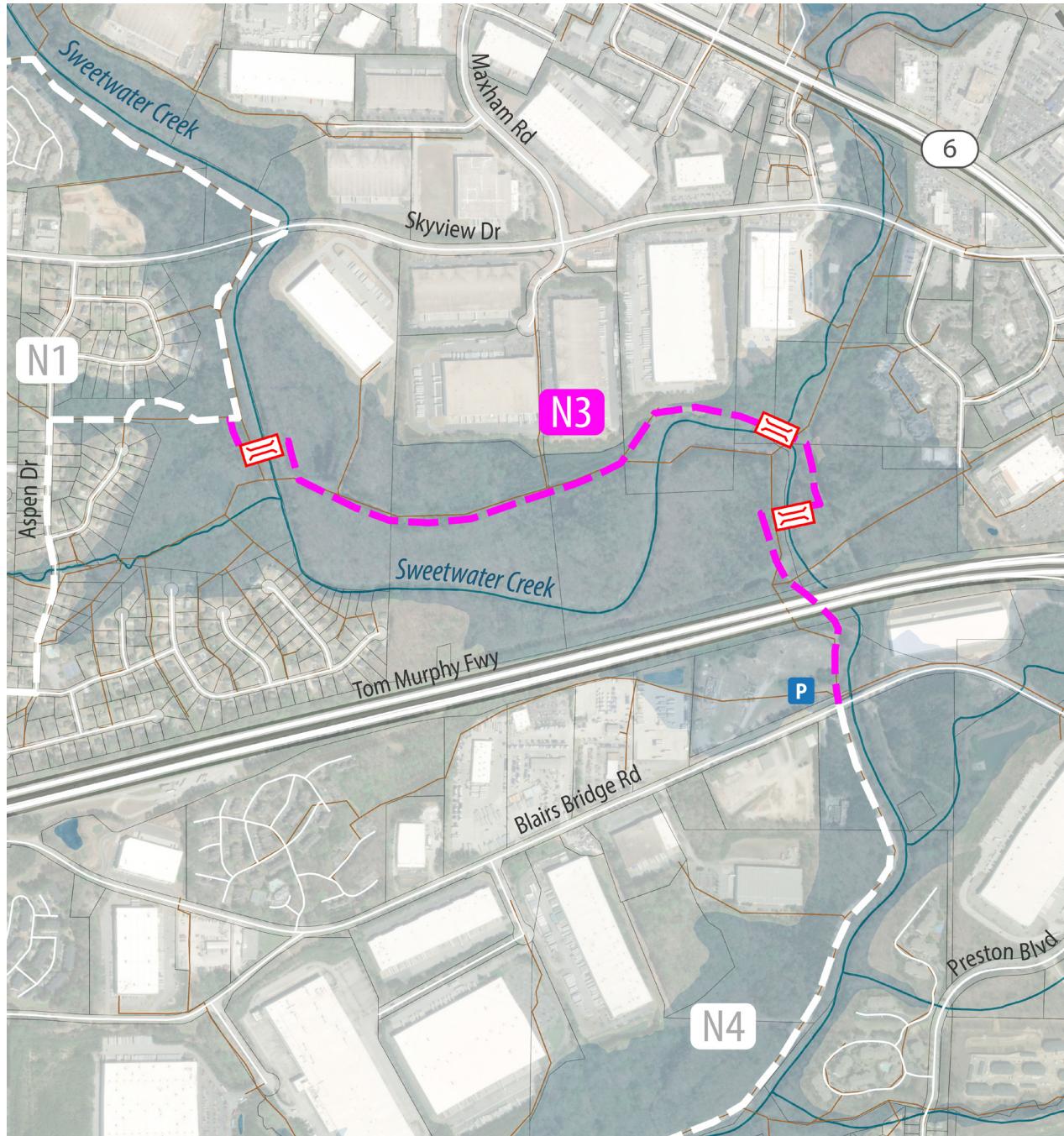
- Lithia Springs Park
- Mozley Memorial Gardens

N2 connects the end of N1 at Lithia Springs Park to the programmed Lee Road/Sweetwater Road improvement project. This project, led by Douglas County, consists of road widening, restriping, and an 8' wide sidepath with landscape buffer along Lee Road from Fairburn Road (Hwy 92) to Hwy 78. This over 4.5 miles sidepath is significant to the region as it connects multiple destinations such as schools, churches, commercial plazas, to the surrounding residents. Therefore, N2 segment is proposed to connect the proposed Sweet Water Creek greenway network to this programmed sidepath infrastructure to bring more impact to the community. The sidepath is proposed to continue along the south side of S Sweetwater Road. At the time of this study, there is no detailed design developed for the proposal at Sweetwater Road and Lee Road intersection. This study assumed the side path will continue along the south/west side without installing a new signal.



## SWEETWATER CREEK GREENWAY PHASE 2

N3



Distance:

1.3 miles

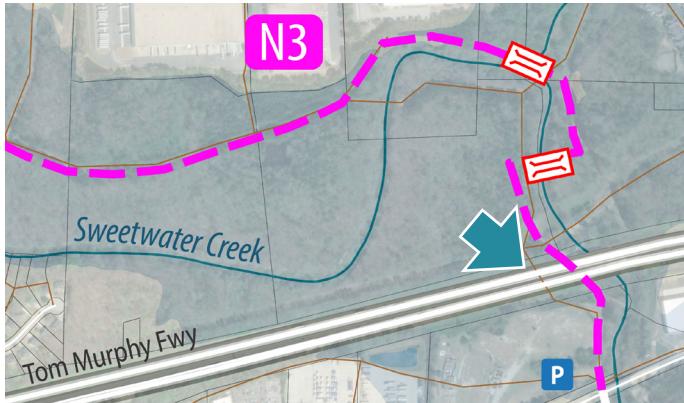
Connecting Destinations:

- N1 Greenway Trail

Segment 3 extends N1 greenway east for another 1.3 miles along the Sweetwater Creek / Sewer corridor to Blairs Bridge Road, where a new trailhead is proposed. N3 branches off the greenway of N1 as it turns towards the sewer line spur to Aspen. The trail will need to elevated up to be over the base flood elevation to cross the creek, then return to grade to then follows the sewer corridor. As the creek bent north, the trail follows the creek curvature to utilize some shelf area behind developed industrial properties. Once turned towards south, the trail will elevate again with bridge structures to cross over the creek back to the westside to then go under I-20 bridge. A future connectivity is identified right before the trail elevates to spurring off and follow the sewer/gas corridor to Skyview Drive as more destinations are recognized and desires for connections arise.

When under I-20, a small retaining wall is proposed to hold the grade of the inner slope from the highway abutment walls. Once past the bridge, trail will be at-grade greenway to follow a maintenance dirt roadbed up to Blairs Bridge Road. Easements from the vacant property is required to build the trailhead at Blairs Bridge.

N3



Existing conditions underpass I-20



Proposed trail underpass I-20

Distance:  
1.8 miles

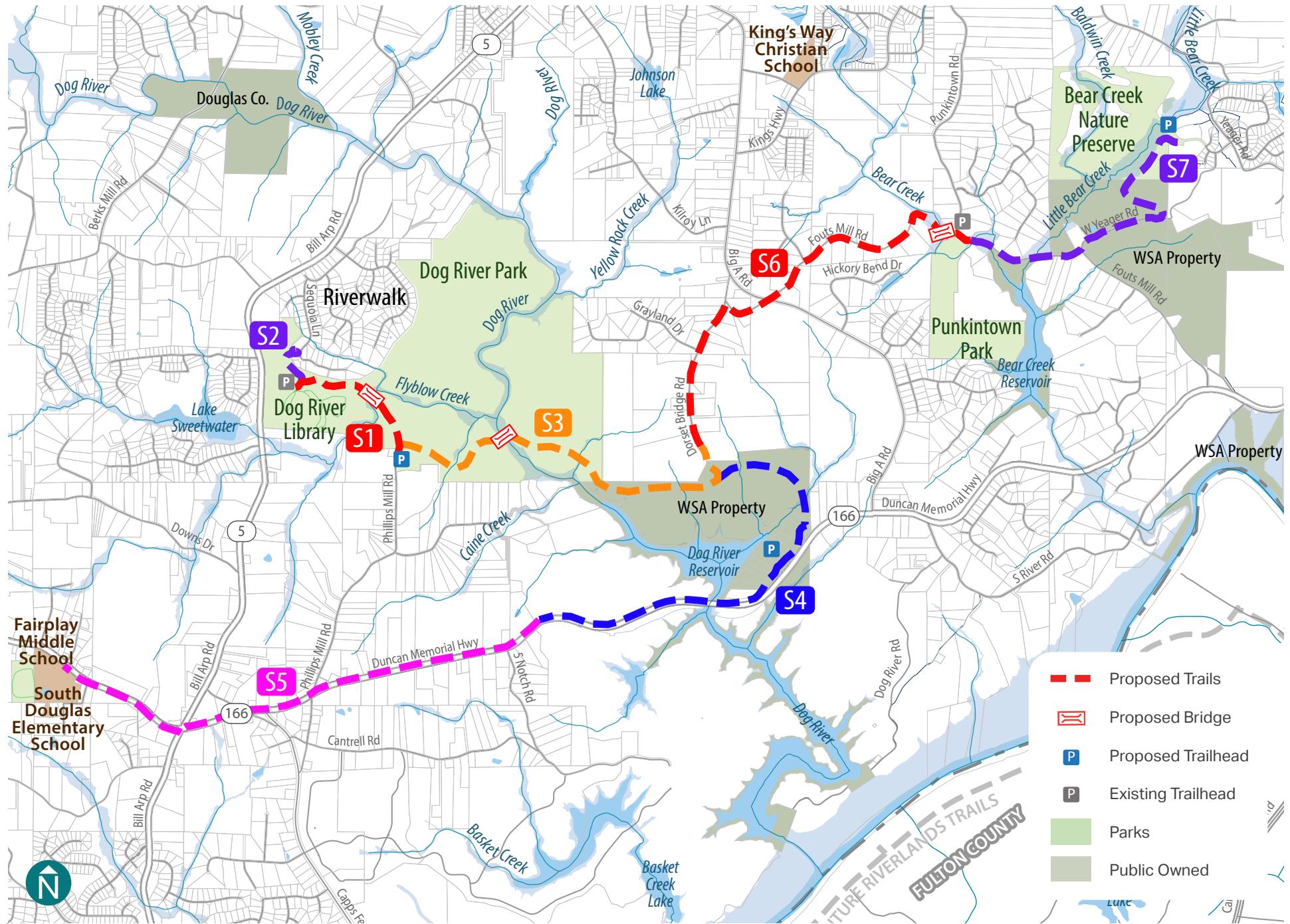
Connecting Destinations:  
• Sweetwater State Park

N4 provides connectivity to the State Park and the trail corridor connecting to the future Chattahoochee Riverlands Greenway along Factory Shoals Rd and Rock House Road. N4 begins with trail going under Blairs Bridge Roads and follows the existing sewer maintenance road south to then bridge across the creek.

PATH has worked with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on designing and building trails within several state parks in the southeast including the Stone Mountain Park, Arabia Mountain Park, and more recently the Fort Yargo State Park. The proposed alignment takes advantage of existing greenspace away from traffic, extends the park further along the waterways, and creates a very enjoyable alignment for many users. The initial feedback received from Sweet Water State Park on the proposed alignment had concerns about safety and maintenance, as the park currently does not have maintenance access to the east side of the property. The PATH believe further coordination and discussion with the Park Management team, DNR, and the County is needed to confirm this alignment with the intention outlined in this study to connect to Factory Shoals Road.



## SOUTHERN STUDY AREA



## DOG RIVER, LIBRARY TO PHILIP MILLS ROAD - S1 RIVERWALKS RESIDENTS SPUR - S2

S1&S2

S1 Distance:	Connecting Destinations:
0.7 miles	• Dog River Library
S2 Distance:	• Future Senior Center
0.3 miles	• Dog River Disc Golf Course

Segment S1 offers a scenic greenway experience that connects the Dog River Library and the future Senior Center to a neighborhood street through the County-owned greenspace just behind the library. The segment starts at the library's trailhead, ties into where the natural trail begins. The proposed paved trail travels east through the wooded area, crosses Flyblow Creek with an approximately 105LF bridge. Once landed on the east side of creek, the trail gets back to be on-grade after a section of boardwalk or bridge structure. Once at grade, the trail follows the old Phillips Mill Road roadbed to where the street currently dead ends. A small trailhead with 8-10 parking spaces is proposed at the end of the street within the existing right-of-way. This provides a secondary opportunity for ease of neighboring residents parking and accessing the trail for recreation.

Segment S2 is a neighborhood spur connection that will connect over 150 single family homes to the library and Segment S1 greenway. The spur alignment starts at the Dog River Library trailhead as a sidepath along the library driveway Bill Arp Road. Then it heads north into a neighborhood homeowner association owned greenspace parcel to connect to Sequoia Lane. Due to steep terrain, a section of boardwalk structure is proposed within this greenspace property. Further coordination and engagement with the HOA board and the neighbors should be conducted prior to prioritize S2 for implementation.







Distance:

2.4 miles

Connecting Destinations:

- Philips Mill Road Trailhead
- S1 Greenway to Dog River Library

Segment S3 should be prioritized after S1 is built to continue the Dog River greenway experience further into the Water Sewer Authority owned property north of the Dog River Reservoir, tie into Dorset Bridge Road where the street currently dead ends. S3 contains portions of at-grade greenway with clearing and grading, retaining walls, and bridge structures. The bridge over Dog River is estimated to be 180LF long. Once landed on the east side, the trail traverses through a series of ridges and valleys to get to Dorset Bridge Road. Before ending at the road, the County will need to acquire easement from one or two of the private properties that locate at the end of Dorset Bridge, where existing right-of-way discontinues.

Distance:

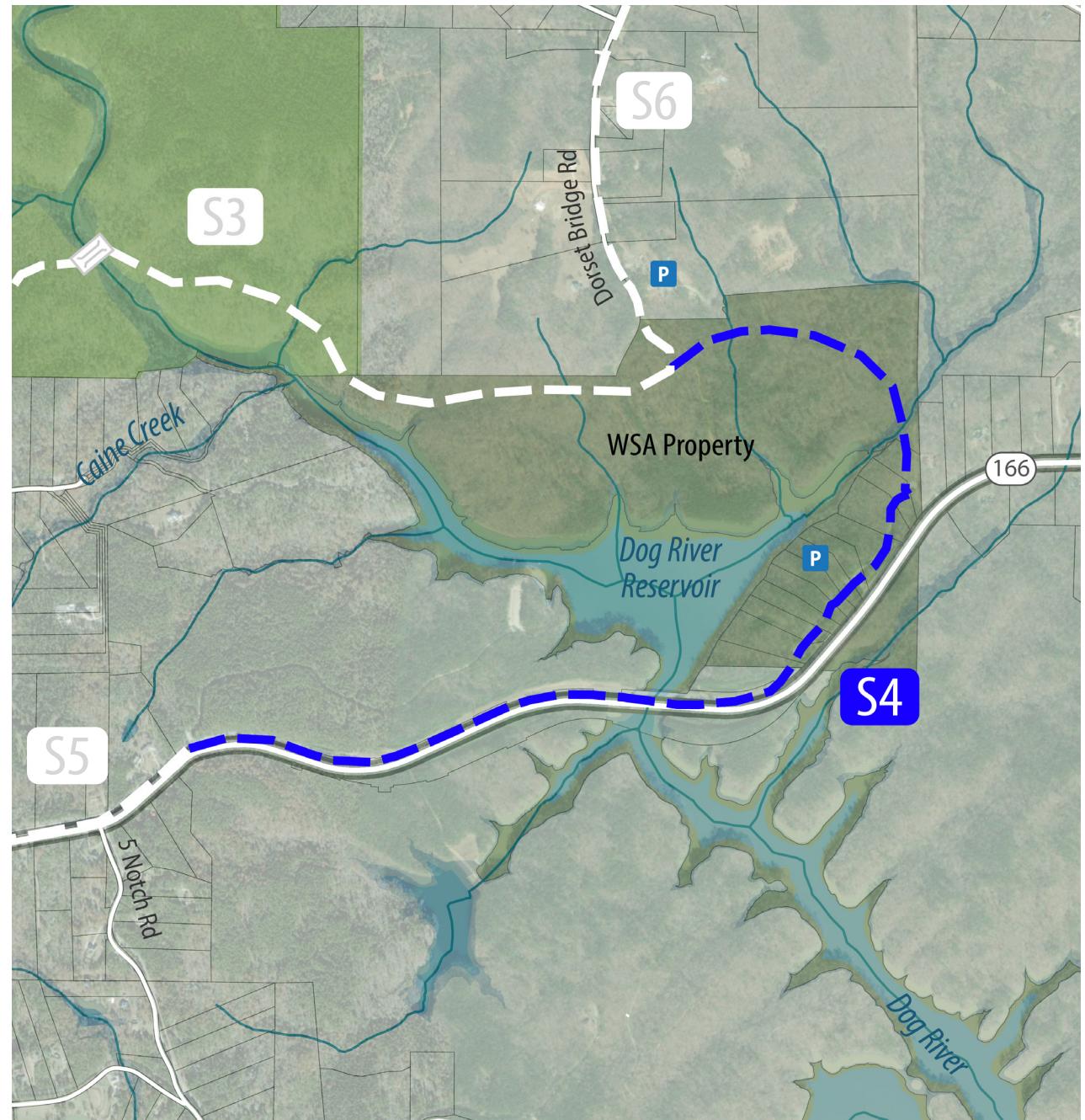
2.4 miles

Connecting Destinations:

- Dog River Reservoir Recreation Area

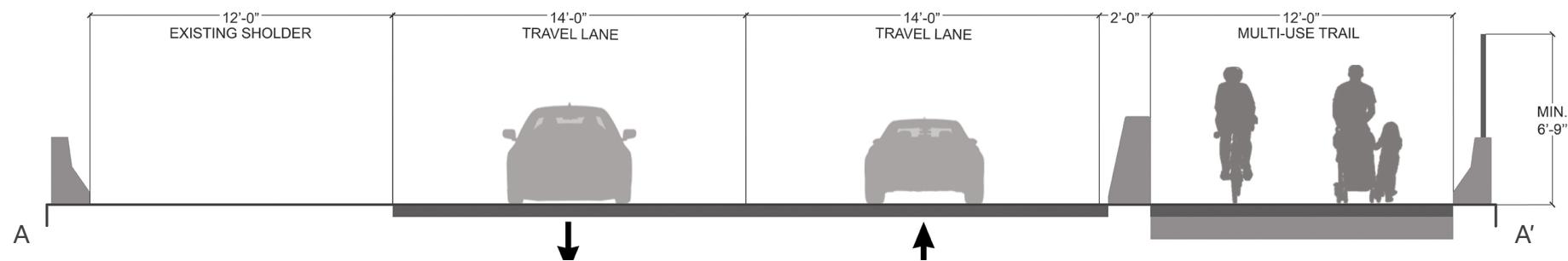
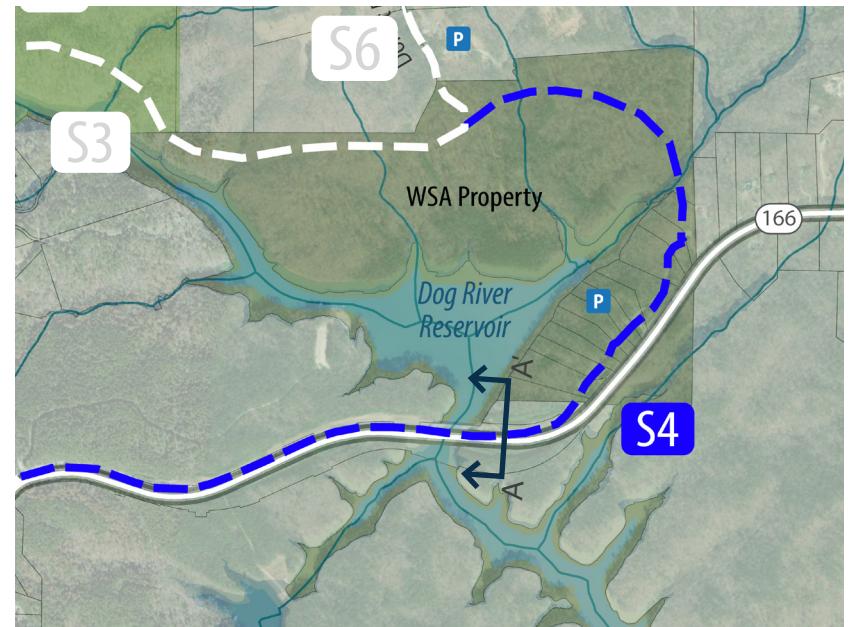
Segment 4 connects to the trail network south of Dorset Bridge Road through WSA's property to the recreation area west of the Reservoir and north of Hwy 166. It connects to S3 near the northern edge of WSA's property south of Dorset Bridge, travels east then south towards a proposed trailhead off of Hwy 166. A series of abandoned pavement and roadways will be upgraded as the new trail and trailhead parking area. The trail continues west along north side of Hwy 166 to cross the river and connect to the entrance drive - River Road to the rec area.

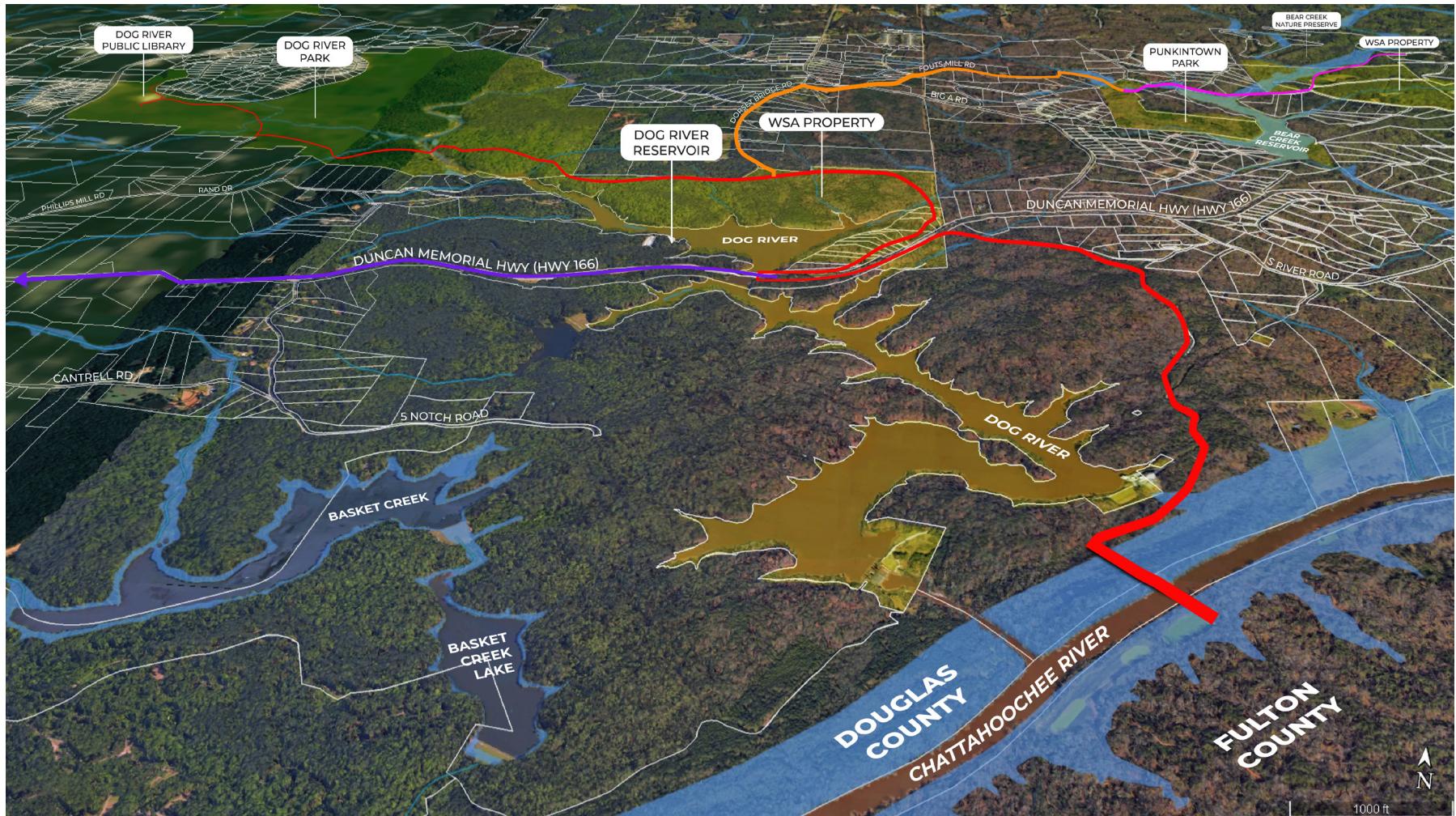
The future raising of the Dog River Reservoir project being led by WSA will determine the timeline of Segment S4. As part of the project, the roadway bridge will be replaced and likely raised by ~35' from its current elevation. This study recommends implementing a new bridge cross section as illustrated in the following page to accommodate safe pedestrian/bike traffic on the bridge, as well as connecting to the sidepath on either side.



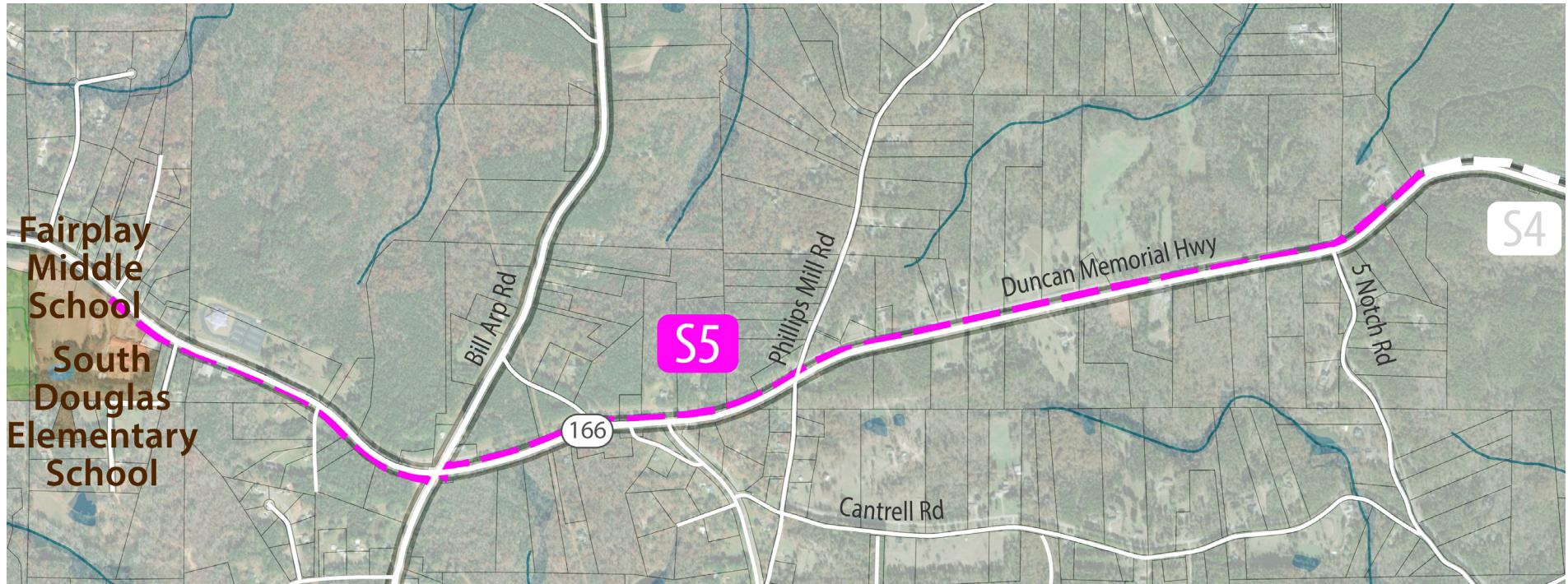


Picture of an abandoned development





The image above shows the grand vision of a continuous 5.4 miles of greenway from Dog River Library to the Chattahoochee River and its future trail system – Riverlands Trails. At the time of the study, the Dog River Reservoir project is estimated to take place within the next 7 to 10 years, therefore, further exploration of trail connectivity past the reservoir south to Chattahoochee River was paused and not included in the final report findings.



Distance:  
2.4 miles

Connecting Destinations:

- Fairplay Middle School
- South Douglas Elementary School

Segment 5 is a sidepath connecting to the South Douglas Elementary School and the Fairplay Middle School along Hwy 166. The trail is proposed on the north side of the road starting from where S4 ends at River Road and Hwy 166. The trail crosses over to the south side at the roundabout and continues south to the schools. The road corridor presents adequate right-of-way for a 10' wide sidepath with a 5' minimum landscape buffer. There are two sections where minor grading and retaining walls are needed to tackle existing terrain.

Distance:

2.2 miles

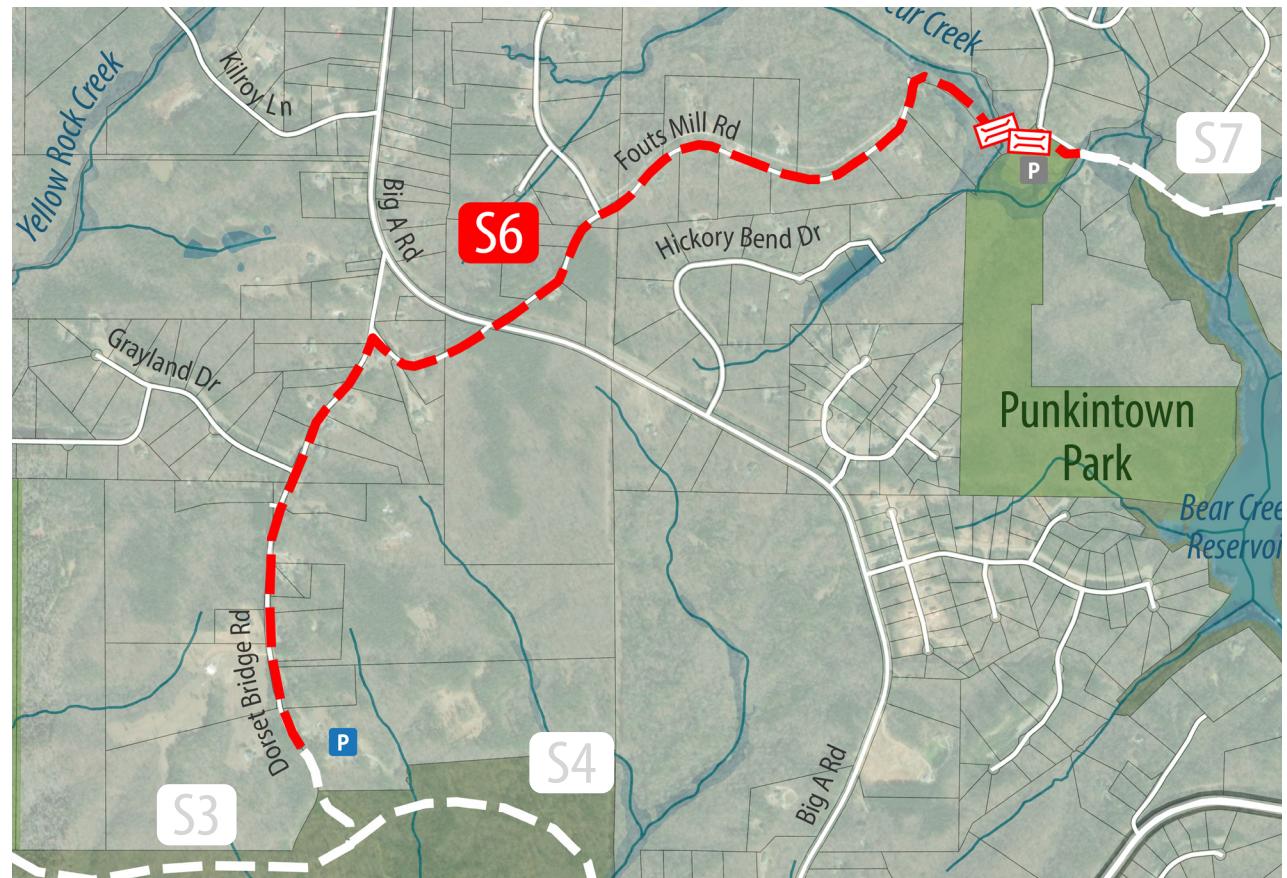
Connecting Destinations:

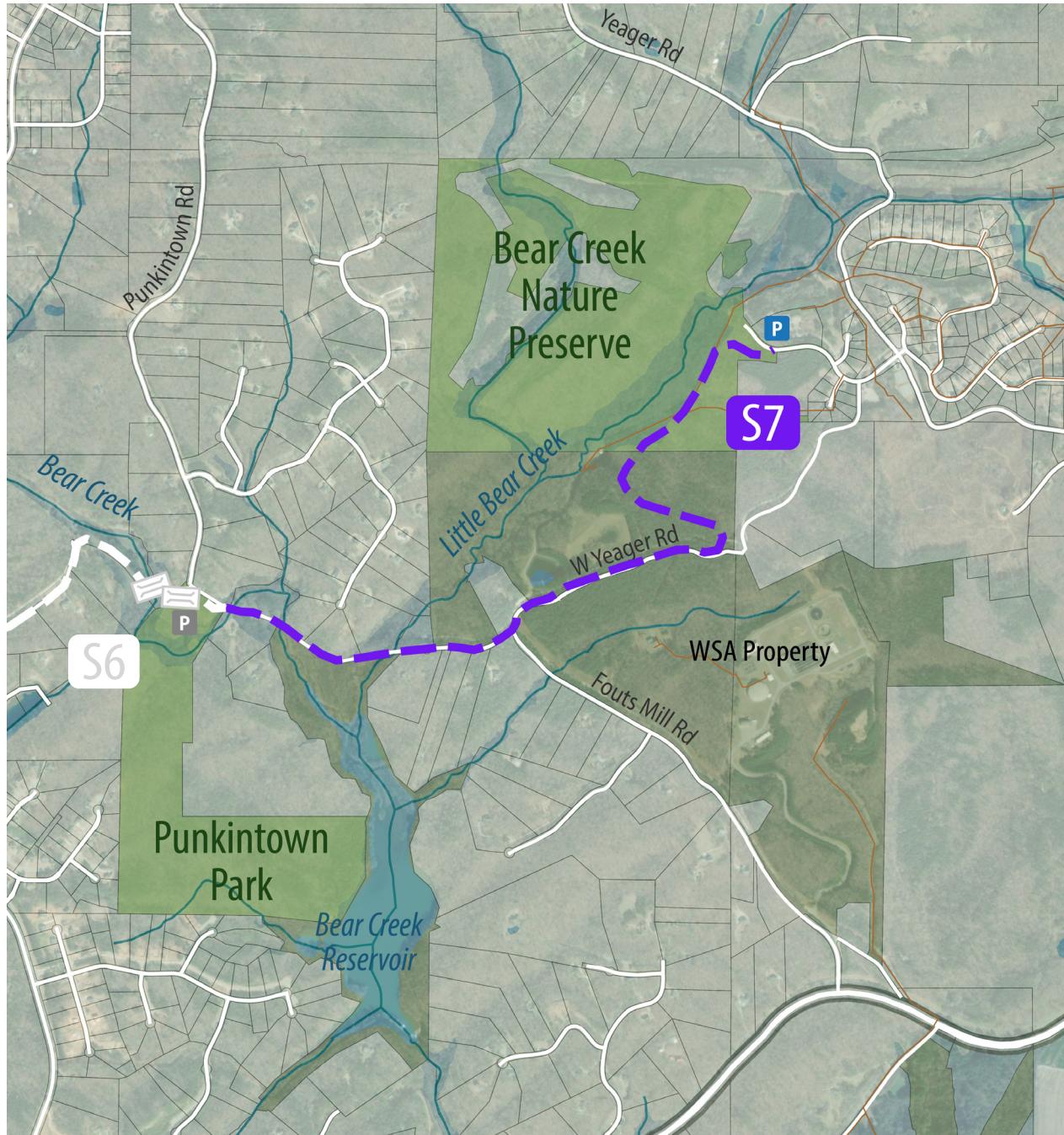
- S3 Greenway
- Punkintown Park

Segment 6 is a long-term phase to build within the proposed trail network. The goal of this segment is to provide a safe route for long distance trail users to cross Bid A Road safely and connect from Punkintown Park to the greenway trail systems (S1-4) and the library. The connection starts at the cul-de-sac of Dorset Bridge Road as a shared-use street. Pavement markings and signage will be installed to provide guidance to trail users and warning message for vehicular travelers that there are other non-motorized users sharing the road. Once turned at Fouts Mills Road, this study suggests closing the portion of road between Big A Road and Dorset Bridge Road for use of trails and local residents only. This measure will cut down the volume of cut-through traffic tremendously and calm the street for a more inviting walking and biking experience. A new three-way stop is proposed at Big A Road and Fouts Mill Road to let trail users cross this busy arterial at a controlled condition.

Once crossed Bid A, the shared-use street improvements continue along Fouts Mill Road to its dead end, where a greenway trail will begin to travel around the greenspace towards Punkintown Park. The County will need to acquire easement from the private property for this connection. The trail will cross Bear Creek with a new bridge then head east as a greenway. It will bridge the park driveway again to tie into the high point of the park near the park's Fouts Mill Road entrance, while leave the rest of the park's facilities not disturbed.

S6 segment initially received push back from the neighbors that live around or direct abut the proposed alignment. Prioritization of this segment should be lower and longer term after more segments of trails are built in the southern study area to warrant the needs and potentially garner more support from the community at that time.





Distance:

1.8 miles

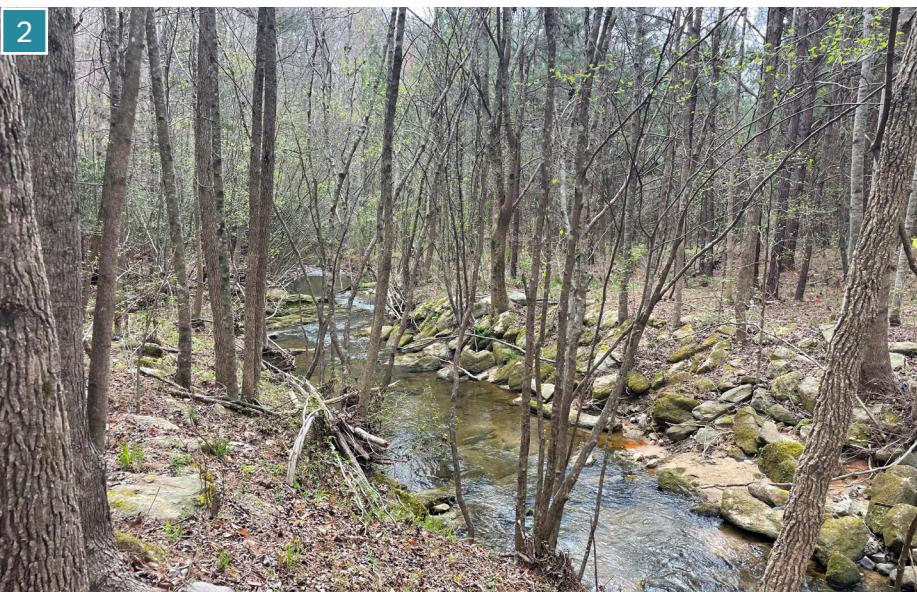
Connecting Destinations:

- Punkintown Park
- Little Bear Creek Natural Preserve

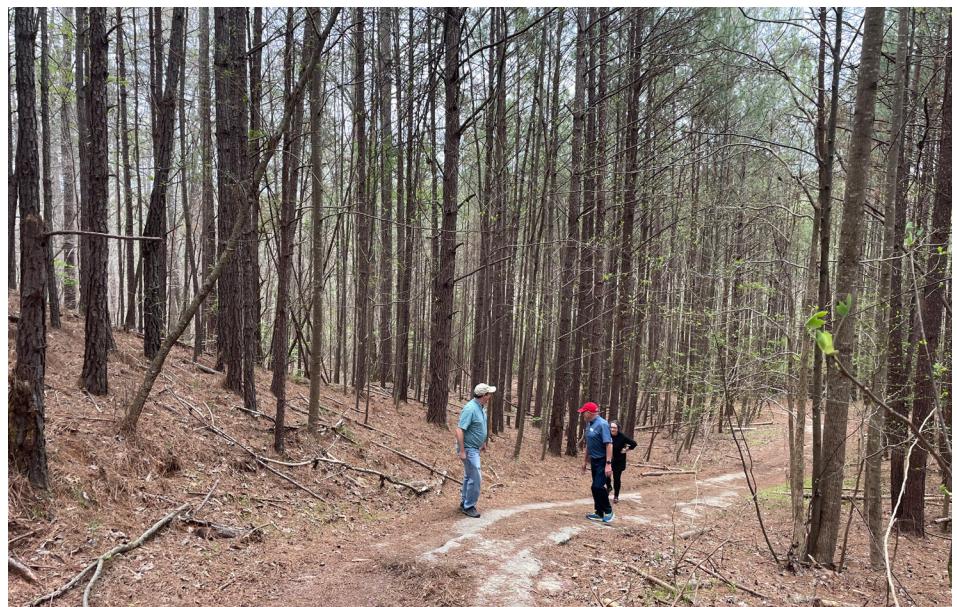
Segment S7 starts from the Punkintown Park trailhead east along Fouts Mill Road, continues through the right-of-way as a greenway where the current road pavement ends. It transitions to shared-use street again along W Yeager Road for about 2,000 feet before the trail dives into the WSA owned greenspace as a greenway trail heading north. This alignment was adjusted off of the WSA's facility maintenance road based on received feedback and now offers greenway experience along the eastern edge of this property. After climbing down some grades from W. Yeager Road, the trail continues through some relatively gentle slopes until it enters the Little Bear Creek Natural Preserve's property, where the trail will follow a sewer corridor. The trail continues along the sewer corridor north to County Manor Drive, where it climbs up to the road elevation and connects to a proposed trailhead. There is a property with large unused asphalt pavement that was suggested by the Southern Conservation Trust as the location for a new trailhead.



Picture of sewer corridor where the proposed trail is to follow



Peaceful scenic area along the creek at the Nature Preserve, providing opportunity as a popular destination for public



Existing old golf path at the Nature Preserve traversing through steep terrain

# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

## PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

The chart on this page shows the preliminary cost estimate for construction for each segment identified in this study. Easement and property acquisition costs are not included but should be considered prior to implementation.

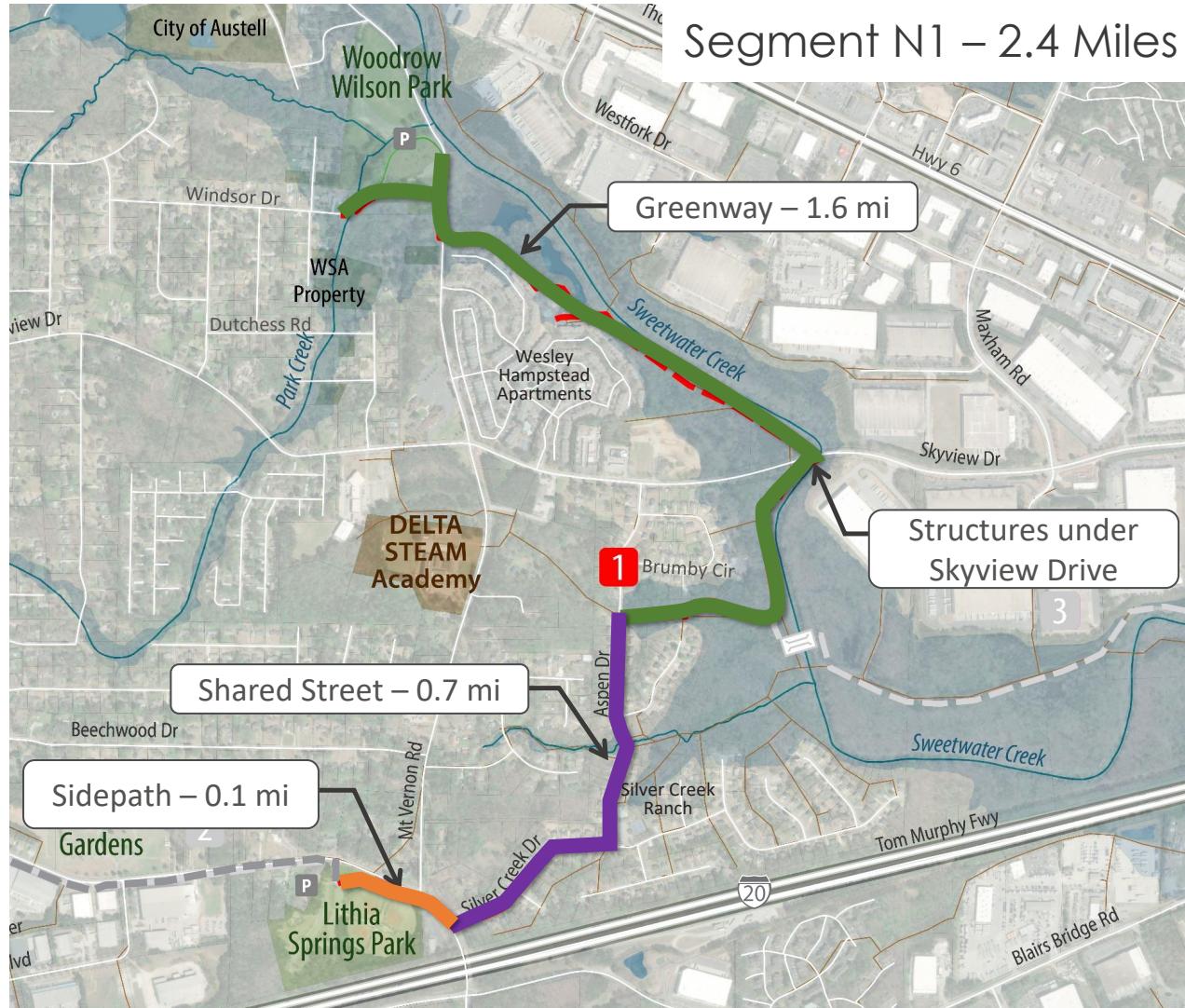
Estimated construction costs are based on material and labor pricing from Spring 2024 using PATH trail standards. Those standards include 10'-12' wide concrete trail (5" thick, no GAB), cast-in-place retaining walls, post and cable handrails, landscape, trail amenities, and signages.

Estimated Planning and Engineering (P&E) costs include surveying, design and engineering for construction, permitting, bidding, and construction administration of the project. GDOT Plan Development Process (PDP) is not anticipated nor included in the presented costs.

**Douglas County Trail Study  
Preliminary Cost Estimate**

Segment #	Mileage	P&E	Construction	Contingency	Total
N1	2.4	\$303,000	\$4,822,000	\$1,025,000	\$6,150,000
N2	0.8	\$169,000	\$2,765,000	\$587,000	\$3,521,000
N3	1.3	\$341,000	\$5,861,000	\$621,000	\$6,823,000
N4	1.8	\$318,000	\$4,738,000	\$506,000	\$5,562,000
S1	0.7	\$203,000	\$2,587,000	\$279,000	\$3,069,000
S2	0.3	\$110,000	\$1,084,000	\$120,000	\$1,314,000
S3	2.4	\$354,000	\$13,273,000	\$1,363,000	\$14,990,000
S4	2.4	\$253,000	\$8,296,000	\$855,000	\$9,404,000
S5	2.4	\$283,000	\$4,925,000	\$521,000	\$5,729,000
S6	2.2	\$170,000	\$1,596,000	\$177,000	\$1,943,000
S7	1.8	\$254,000	\$3,105,000	\$336,000	\$3,695,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>\$2,758,000</b>	<b>\$53,052,000</b>	<b>\$6,390,000</b>	<b>\$62,200,000</b>

## RECOMMENDED MODEL PROJECT



## WHAT MAKES A GOOD MODEL PROJECT?

- **Connects desired destinations** for greater trail use
- **Provides access to Douglas County residents**
- Creates an **inviting trail user experience**
  - Limited traffic interruption, roadway separation, a variety of trail elements, i.e. bridges, boardwalks, trailheads, etc.
- **Ease of implementation**
  - Minimal acquisition, manageable construction and permitting process
  - Estimated cost covered by available local funding or grant
- **Begin construction within 2 years**

# PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION FOR MODEL PROJECT



Key	Address	Owner	Parcel Number
1	715 Crossing Dr BLDG 700	Lytos-Creekside, LLC	4761820002
2	2616 SKYVIEW DR	Michaels Properties, INC	4771820001
3	1575 DISTRIBUTION CT	KTR ATL Two, LLC	4781820001
4	SKYVIEW DR	Silver Creek Ranch	5761820001