

CHCA Update on South Peachtree Creek Trail (PATH)

February 13, 2008

The South Peachtree Creek Multi-Use Trail was proposed over 15 years ago by the PATH Foundation in partnership with DeKalb County and with support from all the local neighborhood associations at that time. Phase 1 will run between Medlock Park at the parking lot and Mason Mill Park at the Burnt Fork Creek Bridge. Phase 2 would complete the connection from this bridge to McConnell Drive, probably via a tunnel under the CSX tracks, and would possibly add a spur to Desmond Drive via Melton Park. Other segments of the Trail are many years and many meetings away.

What is its value to the community? Phase 1 will offer better access to Mason Mill Park for our neighborhood than the current access on Willivee Place, which is several blocks from Medlock Park and has only residential street parking. Phase 2 will offer full recreational and cyclist/pedestrian commuter connectivity between Medlock Park and McConnell Drive and possibly also Desmond Drive at Melton Park.

What will it look like? It will be 10 feet wide with concrete at either end and boardwalk in the middle. There will be a constructed wooden bridge in the middle of Mason Mill Park and a pre-fabricated clear span steel bridge where the trail crosses Peachtree Creek west of the Willivee Drive bridge. See the Arabia Mt. trail for an example of this design.

What about environmental impacts? Some trees will be cut but large trees will be avoided as much as possible. Peachtree Creek will have no structures within its channel to interfere with its flow. The trail will remain above the 100 year flood line, except where it crosses the creek.

What alternative routes were considered? A routing via the power line easement was rejected because of a steep 12% grade, gas line through the center, challenging preconditions from Georgia Power, and the need to cross about eight private properties. A routing through the Willivee Place entrance was rejected by the residents there.

What is the schedule? Phase 1 construction in Mason Mill is expected to begin in February or March and continue for four to five months. Access will be from the Willivee Place entrance to the park. Phase 2 has not yet been scheduled.

What about the “eminent domain” lawsuit? One property owner rejected as improper the taking, with compensation at fair market value or above, of a portion of his land for the trail. If the court agrees, construction across his property could be halted.

What representation does the community have in the process? An oversight committee consisting of members of the Medlock Park Task Force, MANA, CHCA and Heritage Hills works with PATH and the county. Results so far include reducing the trail width from 12' to 10', routing around specific trees, and replacing more concrete sections with boardwalk.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns? Dave Pelton of DeKalb County (dwpelton@co.dekalb.ga.us) and/or Pete Pellegrini of the PATH Foundation (pete@pathfoundation.org).

More information, including maps, documents and links, can be found at the CHCA website: <http://clairmontheights.org/PATH>

To stay up to date via email, join the CHCA listserv by emailing info@clairmontheights.org.