

Cathedral Woods – Neighbors, Nature and the New Reality of the Beltline. (Getting from A to B)

What follows is a brief overview of accumulated knowledge and personal opinions about a 5 acre tract of land that is situated directly behind my house. This one issue has propelled me to be involved with the Collier Hills North Civic Association for the past 8 years. The purpose of this document is two fold, first, to spur further discussion concerning the design and implementation of trails and neighborhood parks as part of the Beltline, secondly to raise the awareness of the vital connection and often overlooked section of parkland.

What is Cathedral Woods? (Geography)

It is a remote natural habitat near the confluence to two woodland creeks. A 5 acre wedge of land between Tanyard Creek, Golfview Rd cul-de-sac, and the 15th hole tee box and fairway of Bobby Jones golf course. (purple trail section on the map) Together with the 5 acre Howard Property (Louise Howard Park), it forms a 10 acre tract that connects Tanyard Creek Park with Bobby Jones Golf Course (Memorial Park). It is located less than 800 yards from Peachtree Road.

Civil War History

There is a great deal of information on this subject I will just skim the surface, and list the most basic facts. As you read these statistics and follow the links provided, consider the fact that these five acres have been as “untouched” as is imaginable, since the events of July 20th 1864. A good source for more complete and in depth information about the Battle of Peachtree Creek is Charlie Crawford of the Georgia Battlefield Association.

Battle of Peachtree Creek Data

- July 20, 1864
- 4,400 casualties in a single day
- 2,500 Confederate
- 1,900 Union
- The events of that day were a blow to the south in The Battle of Atlanta.
- The Fall of Atlanta is often cited as a factor in the re-election of Abraham Lincoln in the fall of 1864

Follow this link to the Wikipedia Entry for the Battle of Peachtree Creek. (There is also a photo of Battlefield referencing Collier Mill)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Peachtree_Creek

If you have the time I recommend spending some time researching what happened in this “EXACT spot” . Follow the link below to read the accounts/letters of the soldiers describing Collier’s Mill. (Scroll all the way to the bottom of the page to read the last entry).

<http://home.att.net/~captnerdo/peachtre.htm>

After The War

The descendants of the Collier family held the land until it passed to The City of Atlanta with the establishment of Memorial Park (Currently Bobby Jones Golf Course and Bitsy Grant Tennis Center). It was always a desire of the family to see this land become a National Battlefield.

Wildlife

When you boil it down to the most basic level, it is rather simple, by seriously considering the needs of the animal populations we will come up with a design that does all it can to retain a unique sense of place. To put it simply "The Wildlife Wins". This is a primary reason to allow the native natural systems to be the overriding design criteria when crossing from the Howard property to Bobby Jones Golf Course. It does more than promote and preserve the diverse populations of the area.

It allows us, the human users, the best view of this beautiful and unique habitat and natural environment.

Mammals

Coyotes
Foxes
Raccoons
Opossums
Mole, Chipmunk, Squirrel

Bird Life

Hawks
Owls
Great Blue Heron
Ducks/Geese
Woodpeckers (many varieties)
Songbirds
Bluebirds
Migrating birds
Hummingbirds

Amphibians and Reptiles

Snakes
Turtles
Frogs/toads

Plant life

Trees

It is all about the tree canopy.... In Tanyard Creek Park (less than 200 yards from this spot) The Beltline with support from the City of Atlanta Parks Department defied the voiced neighborhood opinion, and decided to place the trail alignment in the meadow section of Tanyard Creek Park, instead of the playground (western) alignment. One of the points put forth by the Beltline/City was concern for impact on the tree canopy. Applying the same criteria and mindset would seem to dictate the design of a natural accessible trail passing through this tree canopy as unobtrusively as possible. (Please note that the alignment through Tanyard Creek Park is still not finalized and is still under review.)

- Tulip Poplar are the most spectacular specimens
- Cottonwood
- Persimmon
- Pine

Invasive

Non-native invasive plants are a problem and work needs to be done to help the overall health of the woods, by removing these non-native invasive plants. A great deal of support and knowledge exists in the neighborhood to facilitate this work. I am hopeful that working under the direction of the parks department these neighborhood efforts could significantly improve the health of the woods.

- Privet removal
- English Ivy removal
- Re-introduce native species

Aquatic – State of the Creek

- Tanyard Creek is one of the dirtiest in the city (documented by watershed management to run with treated sewage over 70 times per year (any rain event)
- Once current construction of storm water tunnels are complete, in the fall of 2008. These “events” should decrease to 2-4 times per year. (Hurricane/flood storms)

I am not going to get bogged down in the topic of water quality as it relates to Tanyard Creek. The creek can be viewed as a symptom of the larger issue of The City of Atlanta, the state of its/our watershed. I applaud the Current Administration of the city in its effort to finally address this area of our infrastructure that has been ignored for too long... Being the eternal optimist, I do think that here also lies a potential to restore the beauty and honor of the stream. These networks of streams, ridgelines and flood plains are the defining geographic feature, of our city.

I urge everyone to read the book published this past summer (2007): **Peachtree Creek: A Natural and Unnatural History of Atlanta's Watershed (Hardcover)** by [David R. Kaufman](#)

What CAN & SHOULD Cathedral Woods Become

Atlanta's Outdoor Cathedral

A Civil War Memorial

A Place with "Recuperative" Powers

A Place of Personal Reflection

An Oasis that is uniquely "Atlanta"

With all the initiatives currently under way in the area, (Beltline, Peachtree Corridor, New City Transportation Plan). I think we are poised at a unique moment in time to capture the combined energy of all these initiatives. In partnership with neighborhood participation and local businesses we can effect long lasting and positive change to the entire area.

I urge everyone to take a moment out of your busy schedule to walk to the privet cleared area in Cathedral Woods, (purple line on the map). Stop and stand for 10 seconds to observe the sights and sounds of this unique urban oasis.

- * Setting the bar high
- * Acknowledging Limits
- * We can only do so much
- * But lets do our best

Working with Piedmont Hospital

I personally believe a design and solution that incorporates the Piedmont/Shepard campus into the surrounding trail system is vital to success. The back side of the hospital from Collier Rd to Peachtree Street should be developed as a pedestrian/bike corridor. (This is the area between the CSX right-of-way and back of the Piedmont/Shepard Campus, red line on map). If Piedmont Hospital is in agreement with this basic premise, it removes the burden of "through traffic" as the overriding design criteria for Cathedral Woods, and possibly Tanyard Creek Park. Also, as these trail and improved neighborhood amenities for biking and walking are developed, employees and patients of the Piedmont campus should be considered as a major source of potential users. In fact if designed properly, the system of connected "trails" could be thought of as an amenity and addition to the healthcare facilities of Piedmont Hospital and Shepard Spinal Center.

Possible Solutions

I have included so many talented design professionals on the distribution list for this e-mail, that I will not even attempt to pass off this document as more than it actually is. However, after years of discussions with some of these same people and asking "what if" questions that "acquired" some these ideas and formed these opinions. I look forward to continuing this discussion with all stakeholders to create detailed designs. I put forth the items listed below only as starting points not as foregone conclusions.

Holistic Approach

As the recent discussions involving the trail alignment point out, there is a great deal of interest and concern about the design and implementation of neighborhood trails. I feel the entire section, from the point the trail diverges from the main transportation corridor (point A on the map) until it re-unites with the corridor (point B on the map), needs to be thought of as a single entity.

How to allow the best access and create the most satisfying user experience.

Create 4 parallel "tracks" (see map)

- 1 - Ardmore Rd – back of Piedmont Sheppard connection to Peachtree*
- 2 – Tanyard Creek Park to Dellwood cul-de-sac to Dellwood and Colonial Homes*
- 3 - Tanyard Creek Park to Redland to Golf view Drive to Colonial Homes/Bennett Street*
- 4 - Through Howard Property/Cathedral Woods/Bobby Jones Golf Course*

Upgrade Streetscape for Dellwood, GVD, Redland

- Additional sidewalks*
- Traffic Calming*
- One side parking?*
- Bike Lanes?*

Design Considerations

- Innovative Approach*
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of the location,*
- Community (end user) Involvement*
- CPTED Principles (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)*
- Specific Neighborhood Design Ideas/Concerns*
- Raised Platform for Cathedral Floor*
 - Through the 5 acres of wooded land*
 - North end of bridge to Bobby Jones Golf Course (15th tee box)*
 - Wide expansive – seating*
 - Wheelchair Parking*
 - This is the vestibule of the church*
- Bobby Jones Golf Course*
 - Keep trail within established boundaries of the golf course*
 - Minimize Tree Impact*
 - Minimize Impact on Existing Single Family Homes*

Summary

The Beltline is the project that will do more to shape this city over the next fifty years than any other initiative. Bottom line there is a huge potential for this to be such a unique section of Greenway Beltline Parks. Even more important in the short term for the community, we should seize this opportunity to improve our neighborhood in a way that increases the “livability” and quality of life for the surrounding residents.

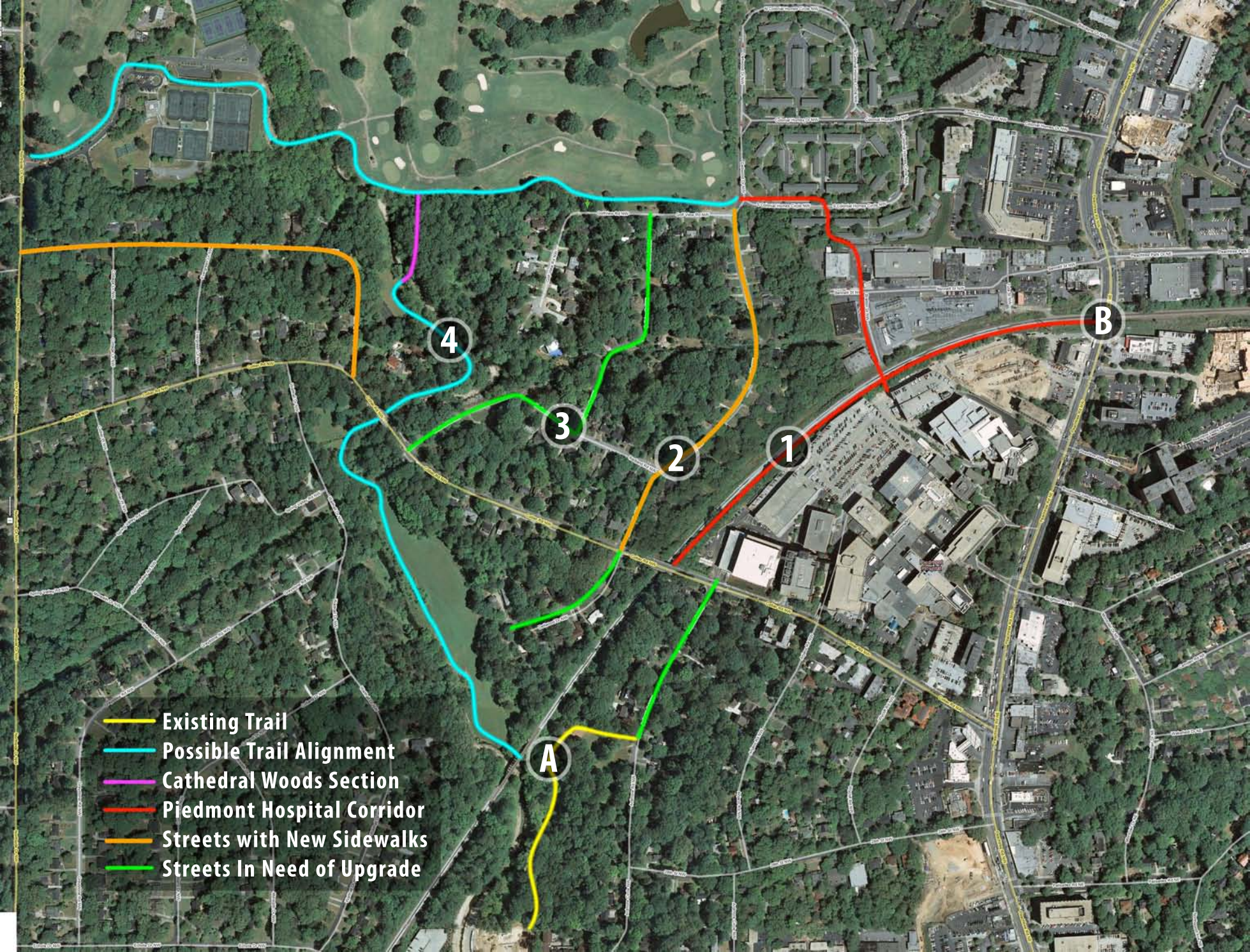
CC: list

Here is a list of the bcc addresses for this e-mail. In most cases I have had serious discussions with these people concerning this small “hidden” park space. All of these discussions have centered on the current state of this property and its possible future. I wish to thank each and every one of these individuals for their time and input.. I consider all of you the authors of this document.

Charles/Pete McTier – Woodruff Foundation – retired	Bill Fowler – Path Foundation Board
Jack Gilbert – Trust for Public Land	Ryan Gravel – “Father” of the Beltline
Bob Hughes – HGOR	Larry Kelley – Pope & Land
Piedmont Hospital – Holly Bates Snow	Piedmont Hospital – Tim Stack
Shepard Spinal Center – Gary Ulicny	
Dianne Harnell Cohen, Commissioner Parks Department	
Paul Taylor – Parks Department	Clair Muller – City Councilwoman
Steve Cover – City Planning	Heather Alhadeff – City Planning
Jeff Williams – City Planning	Terry Montigue - Beltline
Tina Arbus – Beltline	Jonathan Lewis – Beltline
Howard Lalli – Beltline	Roland Young - Beltline
Marcia Bansley – Trees Atlanta	Path Foundation – Ed McBrayer
Path Foundation – Pete Pelligrini	Shannon Kettering ECOS Environmental
Alfie Vick ECOS Environmental	Christopher Dye ECOS Environmental
Ed McKinney – Glatting Jackson	Eric Ranney – Chair NPU C
Steven Hart – Neighborhood Beltline Coordinator	Karen O’Brian – Friends of Tanyard Creek
Charlie Crawford – GA Battlefield Association	Jim Howard
Andy Smith	Markham Smith
Roger & Lynda Moister	Jim & Laurie Fenwood
Ken & Connie Johnson	Alvin Ferst
Mark & Michelle Corrigan	Becky Winkler
Katherine Caesar Montgomery	Jim Wright
Dr. Keith Sanders	Dan Bauer
Bob Fehskins	Enrique Anderson
Harold Solomon - Brookwood Alliance	Rod Cook
Joe Gardner	Susan Dickerson - Peachtree Battle Alliance
Liz Coyle	

About the author: Tony Casadonte

- President of Collier Hills North Civic Association 2004-2007
- Member of Neighborhood trail steering 2002-2004
- Resident of 399 Golfview Rd since 1998
- Peachtree Hills Resident 1995-1998
- Resident of Metro Atlanta, since 1986



- Existing Trail
- Possible Trail Alignment
- Cathedral Woods Section
- Piedmont Hospital Corridor
- Streets with New Sidewalks
- Streets In Need of Upgrade

4

3

2

1

A

B