

East Decatur Greenway  
Community Greenspace and Trailhead  
Design Competition for Students and Emerging  
Professionals

Proposal due by September 1, 2015 at 9:00 p.m. EST

Submit to: [eastdecaturgreenway@gmail.com](mailto:eastdecaturgreenway@gmail.com)

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## Introduction and Overview

### Description

East Decatur Greenway is launching a competition to solicit design ideas for the future community greenspace and trailhead being developed at 890 Columbia Drive, Decatur, Georgia. The competition is limited to landscape architecture students and emerging professionals (those who have been working in the field for five years or less) who live in Georgia and are a member of American Society of Landscape Architects. East Decatur Greenway will award \$1,500 to the winner of the competition.

In addition to the cash award, the East Decatur Greenway will issue a joint press release with the winner, will thank them publicly via Facebook and Twitter, and will recognize them at public events. The winner will have the opportunity to continue their involvement in the project beyond the competition, as resources allow.

### Project Background

The 890 Columbia Drive property is a one acre plot of land that has caused concern and distress in the community. Originally developed as a gasoline station in the 1940s, the property operated as such until it was abandoned in 1999 and left to deteriorate. Once abandoned, the property became overgrown with kudzu, the subject of vandalism, and a haven for illicit activities.

In the true spirit of a grassroots campaign, residents interested in promoting a walkable community and upset with the state of this run-down property (and the owner's unwillingness to address its visual and environmental problems) took action. They formed East Decatur Greenway in 2011, and have been working with city, county, state, and federal agencies, as well as the PATH Foundation and community members to acquire the property and obtain funding for its eventual redevelopment as a greenspace.

In addition to acquiring 890 Columbia Drive, East Decatur Greenway has acquired two neighboring properties: 884 Columbia Drive and 882 Columbia Drive. Combined, these three properties total approximately one-and-a-half acres of land that will eventually become a community greenspace. The neighboring properties are not considered brownfields, but will need improvement in order to become a community greenspace.

The Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Assistance Program has provided significant technical and financial support to East Decatur Greenway in order to remediate 890 Columbia Drive. In 2013, the EPA provided a technical assistance grant that provided funds for the completion of a Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) as well as for removal of the gas station building, three underground storage tanks, and additional materials and equipment at this property. In 2014, the EPA awarded East Decatur Greenway a \$200,000 grant to remediate the property. Remediation is expected to begin in the fall of 2015 and to be complete between October 2015 and April 2016.

East Decatur Greenway is working with the PATH Foundation to build a 1.1 mile trail from the property at 890 Columbia Drive to the Avondale Estates MARTA Station. The PATH Foundation anticipates beginning trail construction in the fall of 2015 and finalizing construction between December 2015 and May 2016.

Through this design competition, East Decatur Greenway is soliciting drawings and supporting plan documentation that will enable us to finalize the transformation of the property into a community greenspace once the property has been remediated.

Working with the neighborhood associations and others interested in promoting alternate forms of transportation, East Decatur Greenway has developed a collective vision for this underutilized parcel. The primary vision is a community greenspace that can be shared by schools as an outdoor classroom. Another priority is the construction of a trailhead for a multi-use bicycling and pedestrian path that will connect the property to the Avondale Estates MARTA station.

### Site Visits

East Decatur Greenway will not host a site visit; however, interested applicants are welcome to visit the property at their own risk.

### Contact Information

Questions should be directed to Michele Ritan, director at [eastdecaturgreenway@gmail.com](mailto:eastdecaturgreenway@gmail.com). No phone calls, please. All questions must be submitted by July 10, 2015. Updates and project-specific announcements will be released via our Facebook page ([East Decatur Greenway](#)) and Twitter account ([@DecaturGreenway](#)).

### Timeline

East Decatur Greenway will follow the below proposed timeline, while reserving the right to modify as needed. Any changes to the timeline will be announced via our Facebook and Twitter account.

- June 25: Launch of competition
- July 10: Deadline for submission of questions
- July 17: Answers to questions posted at [facebook.com/eastdecaturgreenway](https://facebook.com/eastdecaturgreenway)
- September 1: Submission deadline
- September 2-20: Jury deliberations
- September 21: Winner announced

## Design Specifications

Applicants are asked to submit design ideas for 890, 884, and 882 Columbia Drive that support and align with community interests for the greenspace. East Decatur Greenway and its consultant have held several visioning sessions and meetings with residents and schools to solicit feedback for the proposed greenspace. A complete compilation of collected input is included in Appendix D for reference.

Based on this feedback, East Decatur Greenway has identified the following ten priority design specifications for the greenspace design, listed in the Table 1. Additional detail on each of these design specifications is listed below. The applicant should address and meet each of these specifications in the design.

**Table 1. Priority Design Specifications**

1. Property constraints
2. Trail design
3. Flora
4. Buffer between park and road
5. Parking and accessibility
6. Outdoor classrooms
7. Solar powered lighting
8. Seating
9. Signage
10. Implementation Budget

### Property constraints:

The property is located at 890, 884, and 882 Columbia Drive, Decatur, Georgia, and it is approximately one-and-a-half acres in size. Columbia Drive borders the west side of the property. Shoal Creek runs along the south-east side of the property. The Friends School of Atlanta is located immediately adjacent to the property on the west side. Design plans should be limited to this space, as outlined in Appendix B.

### Trail design:

The PATH Foundation is building a 1.1 mile bike-ped trail from the Avondale Estates MARTA Station parking lot on East College Avenue to the property at 890 Columbia Drive. A map of the proposed trail is included in Appendix A. The proposed trail will travel in front of the Friends School and then will cross the street at the light on the corner of Katie Kerr Drive and Columbia Drive. PATH survey plans available upon request. From that intersection, the trail will be built along Katie Kerr in the right-of-way on the north-west side of the street. The trail will be separate from the street.

The PATH Foundation is designing the trail. However, the conceptual design should include plans for the entrance of the trail onto the property and a formal on-site trailhead. For additional information, see Appendix A.

### Flora:

The schematic should include plans for incorporating native, drought-resistant, and low-maintenance plants into the landscape. As a non-profit, the East Decatur Greenway will have limited funds for on-going maintenance; as such special care will need to be paid to selecting plants that require limited maintenance throughout the calendar year.

There are no water utilities on the site. The drawings should show the recommended locations of plantings. In addition to the drawings, the applicant should submit a list of recommended plants for the greenspace. The list should include the plant's Latin name and the common name.

#### Buffer Between Park and Road:

As noted above, the property borders Columbia Drive, which is a busy, high speed road. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour, however, the actual average speed of most drivers likely exceeds 45 miles per hour. To enhance safety and improve the visitor experience while in the park, residents are interested in a barrier between the greenspace and the road. The barrier could be a low fence, a series of mid-height plantings, a berm, or bollards. At the moment, the property is fenced to discourage dumping. However, this fence will be removed once the remediation is complete and the greenway development is underway.

#### Parking and Accessibility:

The community has expressed near unanimous desire to minimize or prevent parking at the site as there are viable parking options at the neighboring schools. However, residents have asked that the property be accessible to those with disabilities. As such, East Decatur Greenway would like to incorporate handicap parking space bordering the property along Columbia Drive. Additionally, residents have requested bike parking options.

#### Outdoor Classrooms:

There are several schools within walking distance of the property, including the Friends School of Atlanta, the Waldorf School, and the Museum School. These schools have expressed interest in having an informal outdoor classroom that would support environmental education initiatives.

#### Solar Powered Lighting:

Many residents of Forrest Hills and Midway Woods have expressed interest in lighting for safety at night. At the moment, there is no electricity service for the site; therefore, East Decatur Greenway is exploring opportunities to install solar-powered lighting at the greenspace.

#### Seating:

Residents have expressed interest in having benches or seats on the property.

#### Signage:

Residents have expressed interest in having way-finding signage that would identify the distance to certain destinations and the estimated arrival time if traveling by foot or bike. They have also expressed interest in signage that would provide historical or environmental information regarding the property. The signage could be connected with the outdoor classroom or could be stand-alone.

Implementation Budget:

East Decatur Greenway is a non-profit. The organization will rely strongly on volunteer efforts to provide funds and labor to finalize the greenspace and to maintain the greenspace going forward. The design plans should reflect the realities that the organization will have a limited budget for both implementation and maintenance.

## Submission Information

### Submission Process and Requirements

Applicants will submit drawings of the proposed greenspace and trailhead design based on specifications identified in this proposal. Additionally, applicants are asked to provide an overview of the team and their approach to the project, a list of recommended plantings for the greenspace, and an itemized cost estimate.

Submission materials are due by 9:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, September 1, 2015. All items must be submitted via email to [eastdecaturgreenway@gmail.com](mailto:eastdecaturgreenway@gmail.com). In the submission email, include the title "Competition: Team Name." All materials should be submitted in PDF format. All materials submitted through the application process will become property of the East Decatur Greenway.

### Format for Application Materials

Required documents, formatting and labeling is below.

#### 1. Team and Project Overview

- a. 8/12" x 11" PDF
- b. 11 point font - Arial Narrow.
- c. Feature applicant name on every page with the following format: "Overview\_Applicant Name."
- d. Upload with document title "Overview\_Applicant Name."
- e. Include the following sections:
  - i. Team Members' Bio: maximum of 150 words per team member.
  - ii. Proposed Project Concept: explain the aspirations, materials, and design methods for the project (150 words maximum).
  - iii. Proposed Project Goals: explain the objectives of the project (150 words maximum).

#### 2. Design Documents

- a. 24" x 36" PDF of a maximum of two pages.
- b. High-resolution images representing the design proposal for potential public relation purposes.
- c. Feature applicant name on every page with the following format: "Design\_Applicant Name."
- d. Upload with document title "Design\_Applicant Name."

#### 3. Conceptual cost estimate

- a. 8/12" x 11" PDF of a maximum of two pages.
- b. 11 point font - Arial Narrow.
- c. Feature applicant name on every page with the following format: "Budget\_Applicant Name."

- d. Upload with document title "Budget\_Applicant Name."
- e. Include cost of materials and unit costs.

4. Itemized list of recommended plants

- a. 8/12" x 11" PDF.
- b. 11 point font - Arial Narrow.
- c. Feature applicant name on every page with the following format: "Plants\_Applicant Name."
- d. Upload with document title "Plants\_Applicant Name."
- e. List common name and Latin name.

## Selection Process

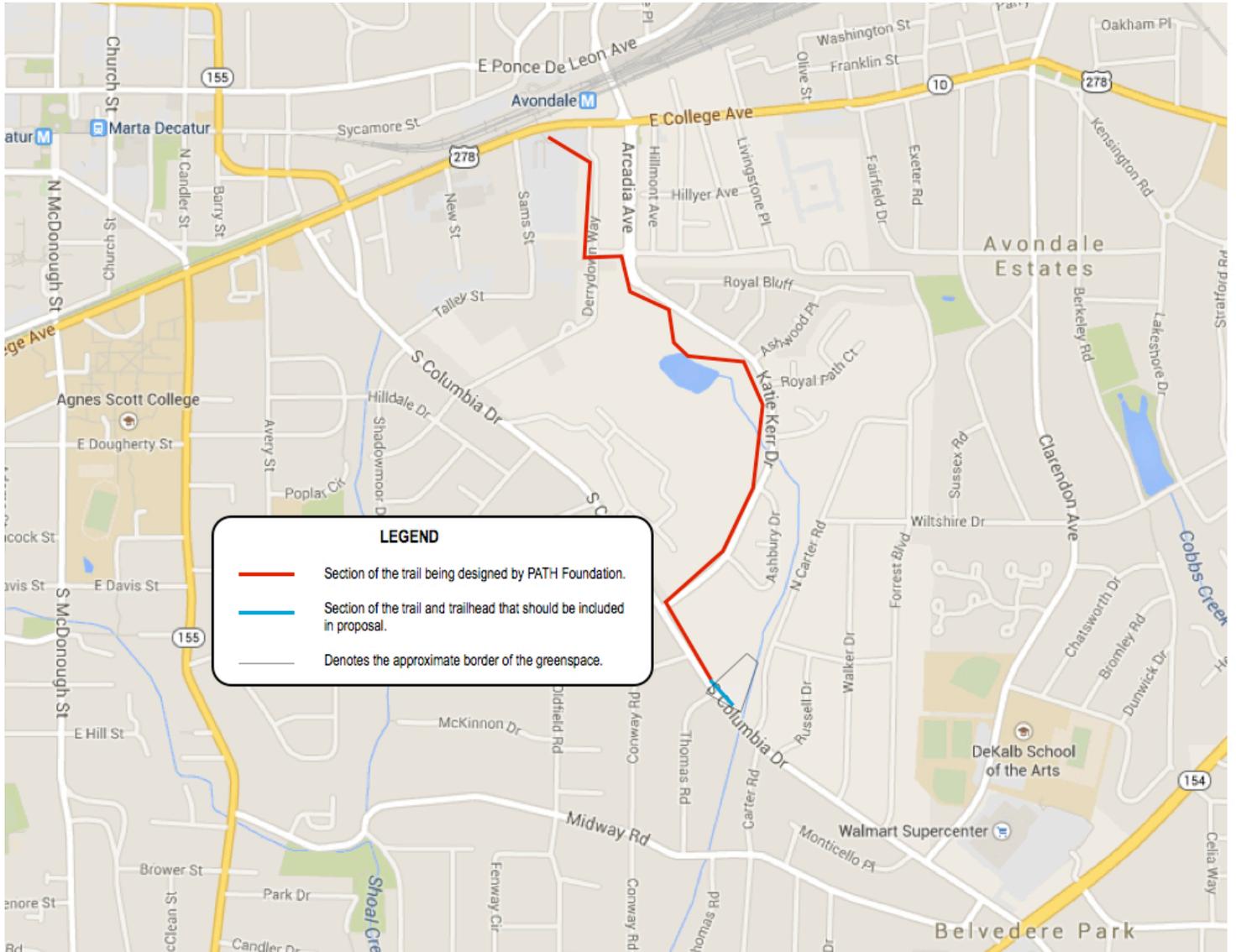
East Decatur Greenway will work with a jury to select the winning design proposal. The panel will prioritize those proposals that address the priority design specifications identified above and provide sufficient detail to assist with implementation going forward.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Design Excellence
  - a. Original
  - b. Inventive
  - c. Environmentally sensitive
  - d. Meets design parameters
2. Functionality
  - a. Safety and security
  - b. Feasible for the proposed conceptual cost estimate
3. Demonstrated Community Role
  - a. Reflects history and interest of community

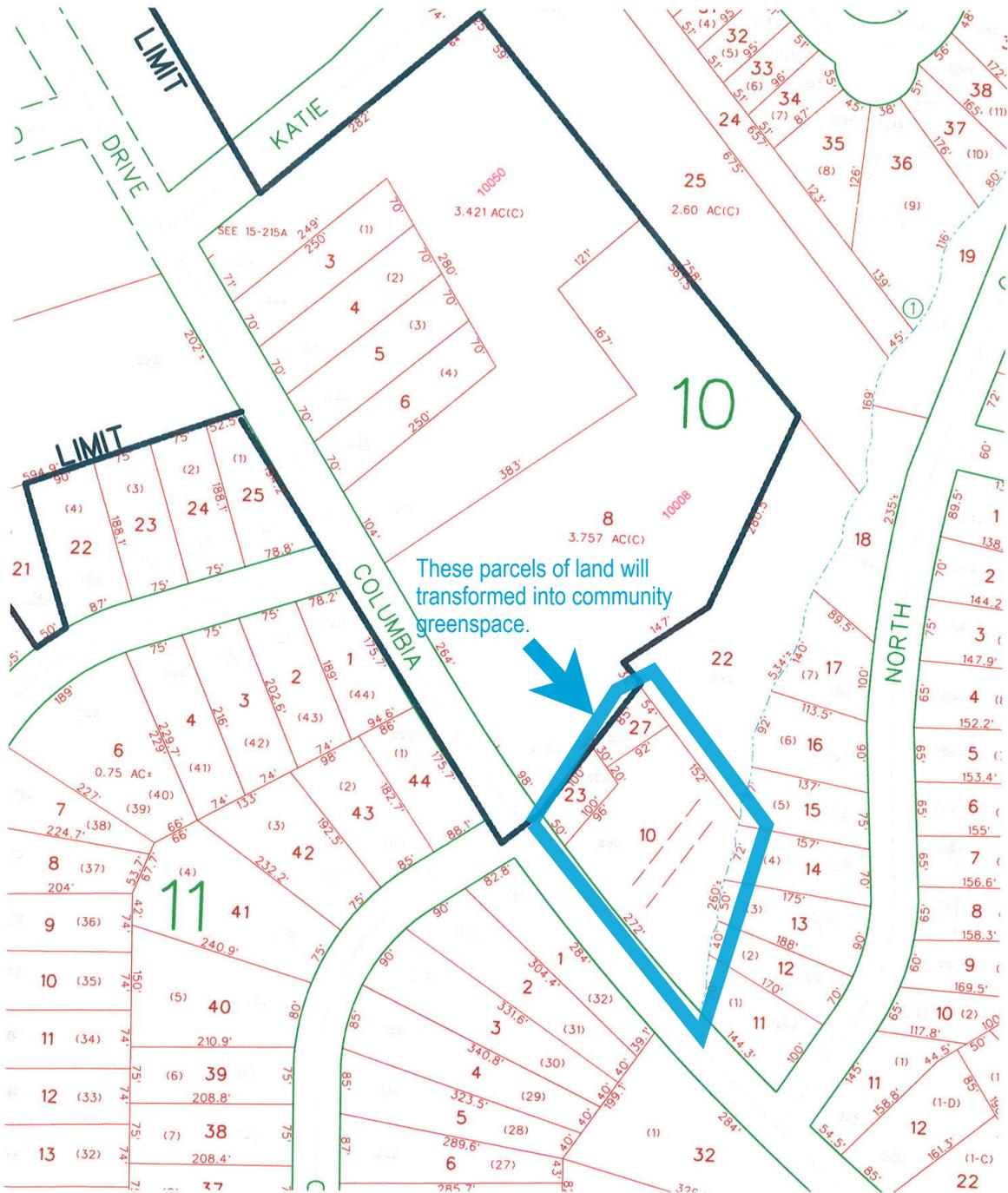
## Appendix A. Draft Trail Map

East Decatur Greenway is working with the PATH Foundation to design and build a trail from 890 Columbia Drive to the Avondale Estates MARTA Station via East Decatur Station. A draft trail map is included below for informational purposes only. The line in red denotes the section of the trail that will be designed by the PATH Foundation. The section in blue denotes the part of the trail that should be included in the applicant's design for this competition. The applicant should include designs for a trailhead on the property.



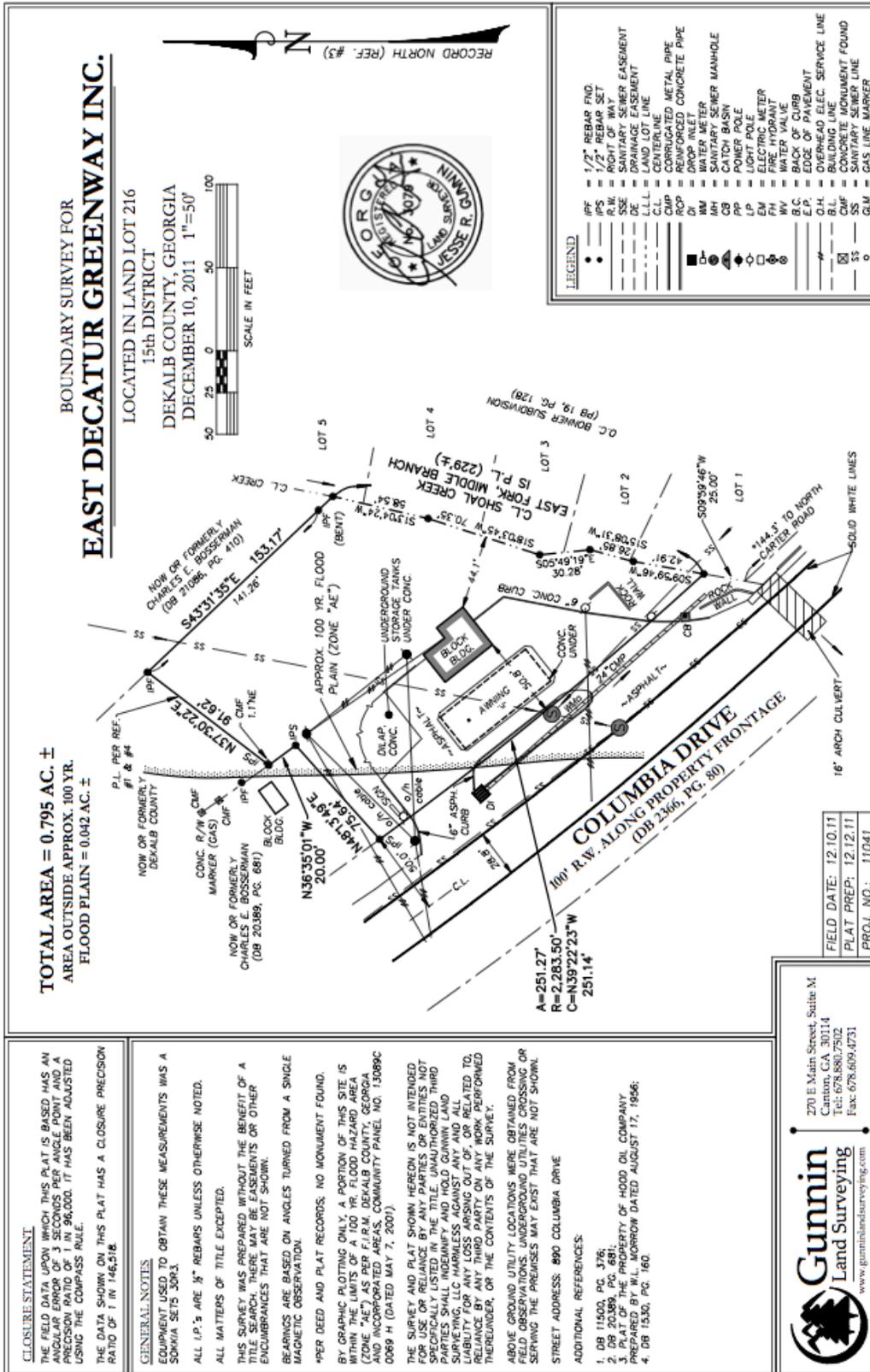
## Appendix B. Property Tax Map

East Decatur Greenspace owns, or is in the process of acquiring, three plots of land that will be transformed into a community greenspace and trailhead. These parcels are identified as 10, 23, and 27 in the tax map below.



# Appendix C. Survey Map

A boundary survey from 2011 is included below. Since the survey was completed, the following structures have been demolished: block building, awning, and much of the asphalt and concrete.



## Appendix D: Visioning Session Results

East Decatur Greenspace held visioning sessions with residents in Midway Woods and Forrest Hills in April 2015. Unedited comments from the visioning session are included in the table below. These comments, along with conversations with neighboring schools, were used to create the design specifications mentioned on pages 5 -7.

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| "The Gateway to Forrest Hills"                          | dog cleanup stations   | lots of flowers   | some (limited) parking (handicap)               |
| 9 month flower gardens                                  | dog friendly (dog waste station)   | maybe a few fish catch and release                              | some isolation from Columbia Drive              |
| a map of points of interest in the area                 | dog park   | mixed height vegetation   | space to bike and run side-by-side              |
| a variety of plants and trees                           | dog park   | mixture of trees evergreen and deciduous                        | swing   |
| a walking path  | dog park   | native landscaping  | swing   |
| access to MARTA   | dog poo receptacles  | native plant landscaping  | swing either for kids or a bench swing          |
| ADA-accessible grating                                  | dog poop bin   | native Plants (with year-round blooms)                          | swings  |
| adopt-a-plot where neighbors can plant seasonal annuals | dog waste bins   | natural space but also a small garden                           | swings and slides                               |
| azaleas   | DOGIPOT stand  | nature - wildlife, trees, flowers, fish, birds                  | trail   |
| barriers on park for motorized vehicles                 | education  | no standing water   | trash and recycling                             |
| beautification  | evergreen / conifer trees  | no trash  | trash containers                                |
| bench   | evergreen shrubs and low maintenance landscape   | park  | trash containers                                |
| bench with landscape / trees                            | exercise station   | pet friendly shade garden                                       | trashcans                                       |
| benches   | field to play in   | picnic area   | Trees   |
| benches   | flowers  | picnic tables   | trees   |
| benches   | fully accessible   | Places to read or meditate                                      | trees   |
| benches by the creek                                    | garden   | play area   | trees and fence blocking view of Columbia Drive |
| benches to sit on                                       | garden   | playground  | urban garden                                    |
| benches under shade trees                               | gazebo   | plenty of trash bins  | urban orchard                                   |
| bike rack   | grass or other ground cover  | public art  | varied elevation                                |
| bike trail  | grass to trees   | safe  | water   |
| blinking light for pedestrian crossings                 | grassy area to spread out a blanket  | safe access via foot, especially at Columbia Drive / Katie Kerr | water feature                                   |
| blueberry and raspberry bushes                          | green grass  | safe from road  | water fountain                                  |
| bridge  | have edible goods / plants feed the community!   | seating   | water Fountain                                  |
| bridge over the creek                                   | history and information markers  | serenity garden   | water fountain (drinking)                       |
| buffer between Columbia Drive and Open Space            | improved landscaping   | shade   | water fountain for dogs (upper/lower)           |
| community garden  | it has been reforested with nature trees and plants and is not a "landscaped" place but instead a reclaimed piece of woods | short fence   | well-lit at night                               |
| a monument to Freiherr DeKalb                           | lighting for safety  | single parking spot for electric vehicle charging station       | well-marked trail                               |
| covered pavilion  | lights   | sitting area  | wildflowers                                     |