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PATH400 Trail Officially Opens in Buckhead

Livable Buckhead hosts ribbon cutting ceremony to open first phase of the trail

(ATLANTA) – The first segment of Buckhead’s new PATH400 trail officially opened today at a ribbon cutting ceremony at the trail entrance on Lenox Road. Atlanta Councilmember Howard Shook, Georgia Department of Transportation Deputy Commissioner (GDOT) Todd Long, Atlanta Regional Commission Executive Director Doug Hooker and other civic and business leaders were on hand to celebrate the opening.

“This is a momentous day for Buckhead as we celebrate the opening of a trail that was started just 10 months ago. This project is a true public-private partnership, and the lightning quick progress is a testament to the cooperation of the numerous organizations involved,” said Denise Starling, executive director of Livable Buckhead (LBI), the nonprofit organization leading the project. “The PATH400 trail is a key component of a long-term vision for a greener, more connected Buckhead that will make the community a better place to live and work.”

PATH400 runs along the spine of GA 400 and, once completed, will run 5.2 miles through the heart of Buckhead, connecting neighborhoods, office and retail locations with a path for bicyclists and pedestrians. The multi-use trail will eventually join with the Atlanta Beltline in the south and trails in Sandy Springs and north Fulton County, providing a key link in a regional trail network.

Phase I, which opened at the event, is a half-mile stretch that connects Lenox Road at Tower Place with Old Ivy Road. It also included production of the new “BUCKHEAD” sign on Lenox Road. Phase II, a half-mile stretch between Old Ivy Road and Wieuca Road, is currently under construction and is expected to be completed in late 2015.

“PATH400 is going to be transformational for our community, opening up underutilized areas of land for greenspace and providing both commuters and families with alternate ways to get around Buckhead,” said Howard Shook, Atlanta city councilmember for district 7, where the trail resides. “Once completed, more than 8,000 people will live within a 10-minute walk of PATH400, and another 44,000 will live within a 10-minute bike ride. It will connect to two MARTA rail stations, a bus station, the Buc shuttle service, two elementary schools and a huge number of workplaces.”

PATH400 is the first step toward implementation of the Buckhead Collection, a planned network of 106 acres of parks and trails in the neighborhood. It is being built almost entirely within GDOT-owned right-of-way for GA 400, a key factor that has speeded implementation of the project and reduced its total cost.

In addition to Livable Buckhead, the agencies and organizations involved in making PATH400 become a reality include GDOT, the City of Atlanta, MARTA, the Buckhead Community Improvement District, Atlanta Neighborhood Planning Unit B, the PATH Foundation, and Trees Atlanta.

“This project is a model that we hope other communities will follow,” said Ed McBrayer, executive director of PATH Foundation. “Buckhead’s leaders have leveraged the diverse strengths of nearly a dozen entities to make PATH400 a reality, delivering a better project in a shorter timeframe than any of us could have done on our own.”

The first event on the trail following today’s ribbon cutting will be a parade for families on Saturday, January 24, to celebrate the unveiling of student winners for the “Playing with Shadows” art contest. The winning artwork will be permanently displayed on panels along PATH400. Local families are invited to attend the event and decorate their bicycles for the parade.

For more information about PATH400 and The Buckhead Collection, visit the Livable Buckhead website, www.livablebuckhead.org.

About Livable Buckhead

Livable Buckhead, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that strives to ensure the long-term viability and prosperity of the Buckhead community. It does this by working cooperatively with individuals, public entities and private businesses to integrate into everyday life and business sustainable strategies that improve the environment and quality of life in the community. For more information about Livable Buckhead and its programs, visit www.livablebuckhead.org

About PATH Foundation

In just 23 years, PATH has developed over 200 miles of trail throughout Georgia and has become a nationally recognized model for trail-building success. PATH’s linear parks have become part of the landscape in urban and rural areas, in affluent and impoverished communities. PATH trails are bringing people together from all races, ages, income levels and cultural backgrounds. Significant progress toward building Atlanta a network of trails includes: The Silver Comet, Stone Mountain, Lionel Hampton, Westside, Arabia Mountain, Chastain Park, South Decatur Trolley, Northwest Atlanta, and Freedom Park Trails.

About Buckhead CID

The objective of the Buckhead Community Improvement District (BCID), working with the City of Atlanta and its community partners, is to meet the challenges resulting from Buckhead’s rapid, primarily automobile-based growth, including improving traffic mobility, enhancing the pedestrian environment, creating better access to public transit, initiating intra-district transportation alternatives, encouraging better integration of land uses and improving linkages to the region’s automobile, transit and bicycle networks. www.buckheadcid.com