Submitted By: Transportation & Public Works
                      Stephen Bailey, Director

Project Type: Bicycle/Pedestrian (bicycle lanes, sidewalks, other bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure, not including Greenway or Rail-to-Trails) related projects - Transportation & Public Works

Previously submitted but not selected: No
Continuation Project: Yes - SPLOST 2011; 12-Pedestrian Safety and Safe Routes to Schools Program

Executive Summary: The Safe Routes Program creates a connected network of safe transportation options to key community destinations in Athens-Clarke County. Using crash data and equity metrics, this program implements systematic safety improvements around schools, transit stops, and parks. Improvements include enhanced crossings, lighting, sidewalks, and other proven safety measures. Project selection prioritizes areas with safety needs and focuses on creating continuous, accessible connections for all users.

Project Total Cost: $ 9,750,000   Total Operating Cost: $ 106,000

Does this Project require the acquisition of any land? Yes

What means of land acquisition will be required? Rights of Way

Project/Program Description: The Safe Routes Program implements comprehensive safety improvements creating connected networks to essential community destinations. This systematic approach addresses safety needs through three coordinated components:

1. Safe Routes to Schools: Targeting a 1.5-mile radius around K-12 schools, this component implements proven safety improvements to protect our most vulnerable users. Improvements include:
a. Enhanced crossings and signals at key intersections
b. High-visibility school zone treatments
c. Pedestrian-scale lighting
d. Continuous sidewalk connections
e. Traffic calming in school zones
f. Projects prioritize locations with demonstrated crash history and high student walking rates.

2. Safe Routes to Transit: Focusing on high-ridership transit stops and corridors, this component improves safety and accessibility through:
a. Enhanced bus stop accessibility
b. Improved crossing opportunities near stops
c. Connected sidewalk networks
d. Lighting improvements
e. ADA-compliant access routes
f. Projects prioritize locations with high transit usage and demonstrated safety needs.

3. Safe Routes to Parks: Creating half-mile safe access zones around public parks, this component includes:

a. Enhanced mid-block crossings

b. Trail connections to neighborhoods

c. Lighting improvements

d. Continuous sidewalk networks

e. Traffic calming where needed

f. Projects prioritize parks with high usage and demonstrated access challenges.

Implementation will be phased over five years, prioritizing projects that address demonstrated safety needs, create continuous network connections, serve vulnerable populations, provide equitable access, and support multiple destinations.

The program incorporates regular safety assessments, usage monitoring, community feedback, coordination with school/transit/parks staff, and before/after evaluations.

All improvements will follow established design standards and incorporate proven safety countermeasures. Projects will be coordinated with other transportation initiatives to maximize efficiency and community benefit. Selection criteria emphasize equity, demonstrated need, and potential for increased safe access to community destinations.

Staff Comment: To promote clean energy/sustainability goals, consider adding: All lighting to be dark sky compliant and, when in association with trails/woods/residences, wildlife "friendly" (2700 K or less) ; If installed, bike racks to include solar/storage charging options; if installed, bench and rest areas to include solar/storage charging rest areas; Solar/storage/canopy may be included to power needed lights and provide shade/heat mitigation in open concrete areas (ex: rest areas/open areas along path). Where plantings are needed, utilize native species, which are better adapted to the Piedmont region.

How is this Project recommended/included in any approved ACCGOV Land Use Plan, Master Plan, Corridor Study, or Service Delivery Plan? The Safe Routes Program implements recommendations from multiple adopted plans: 1) Athens in Motion Plan a) Prioritizes safe routes infrastructure improvements b) Implements high-priority projects from AiM plan c) Advances equity goals through systematic improvements 2) Transit Development Plan a) Improves safe access to transit stops b) Supports transit ridership goals c) Enhances first/last mile connections 3) Parks and Recreation Master Plan a) Enhances safe access to recreation facilities b) Improves park connectivity c) Supports active transportation goals

How is this Project included in the Madison Athens-Clarke County Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS) long-range Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)? The program advances MACORTS safety and accessibility goals while providing potential local match for federally funded projects.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

How will the Project meet the stated Program Goals in the Mayor & Commission Strategic Plan to provide long-term, ongoing contributions to the Sustainable Transportation needs of the Athens-Clarke County?

Goal Area 1; Section D: Drive community transformation with a focus on creating spaces that are respectful and welcoming: The Safe Routes Program creates welcoming spaces by improving access to key community destinations. By implementing safety improvements around schools, transit stops, and parks, we create respectful environments that serve all community members. Design standards ensure accessibility for users of all ages and abilities.

Goal Area 1; Section E: Support & promote healthy lifestyle: moving, eating, forming healthy relationships, physical and psychological care: Safe routes to community destinations directly support healthy lifestyles by enabling active transportation choices. Connected networks to schools, parks, and transit stops encourage walking and cycling while reducing barriers to physical activity. Safe infrastructure supports community health through increased opportunities for daily exercise.

Goal Area 5; Section A: Improve, expand, and maintain sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bike facilities to provide greater opportunities for residents to use active transportation safely: This is a primary goal of the program. By systematically improving sidewalks and crossings around schools, parks, and transit stops, we create continuous networks for active transportation. Projects prioritize filling network gaps and ensuring safe connections to key destinations.

Goal Area 5; Section C: Expand multi-modal Transit access to reduce auto dependency and provide greater mobility for Athens residents: Safe Routes to Transit improvements directly expand multi-modal access by creating safer, more comfortable connections to bus stops. Enhanced crossings, lighting, and continuous sidewalks make transit a more viable option for more residents.

Goal Area 5; Section D: Create more usable and aesthetically pleasing corridor connections between residential and commercial areas: The program creates safer, more appealing connections between residential areas and community destinations. Enhanced crossings, lighting, and continuous sidewalk networks improve the experience of traveling between neighborhoods and local amenities.

Goal Area 5; Section E: Enhance safety for all modes of transportation: Safety is fundamental to this program. All improvements follow proven design standards to enhance safety for vulnerable users. Project selection prioritizes locations with demonstrated safety needs and high potential for increasing safe access to destinations.

Goal Area 6; Section A: Develop well-planned new infrastructure according to future land use values and framework: All safe routes improvements align with land use goals by connecting

residential areas to community destinations. Projects support planned development patterns while ensuring safe access to schools, transit, and parks.

Goal Area 6; Section B: Ensure equitable access to infrastructure to enhance safety and identity: The program uses equity metrics and safety data to ensure fair distribution of improvements. Project selection prioritizes traditionally underserved areas and locations with limited safe access to community destinations.

Goal Area 6; Section C: Provide adequate funding for maintenance of existing and newly constructed infrastructure: Each project includes appropriate maintenance planning and funding. Improvements emphasize durable materials and proven designs that maximize long-term value while minimizing maintenance needs.

Goal Area 6; Section D: Follow through on commitment to 100% Clean and Renewable Energy resolution: Safer routes to transit support clean energy goals by making sustainable transportation options more accessible. LED lighting and energy-efficient signals further support sustainability objectives.

Staff Comment: Consider adding: To promote clean energy/sustainability goals: All lighting should be dark sky and, in association with trails, wildlife "friendly" (2700 K or less) compliant; If installed, bike racks to include solar/storage charging options; if installed, bench and rest areas to include solar/storage charging rest areas; Solar/storage/canopy can be included to power needed lights and provide shade/heat mitigation in open concrete areas (ex: rest areas/open areas along path)

Goal Area 6; Section E: Address ecosystem health, infrastructure sustainability, and resilience: Projects incorporate green infrastructure where possible and support environmental goals by encouraging active transportation. Improvements consider stormwater management and ecosystem health during design and implementation.

Project Costs

Detailed project capital budget costs (to be funded from TSPLOST 2026 only):

Project Costs (round to thousand)		Amount
1. Land Acquisition / ROW / Easement:	$	250,000
2. Design Fees: (Min.12% of New Const.; 14% of reno,; 16% for LEED proj.)	$	720,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: (Min. Minimum of 3% of Construction Costs – used for permitting, etc. Utilize minimum of 10% if land acquisition if necessary.	$	400,000
4. Construction:	$	6,000,000
5. Construction Contingency: (10% of the Construction line item)	$	600,000
6. Testing:	$	180,000
7. Project Management: (4% of the total budget line items above)	$	326,000
8. Project Contingency: (10% of the total budget line items above)	$	848,000
9. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	$	60,000
10. Other 1: Wayfinding	$	100,000
11. Other 2: Education/Outreach	$	75,000
Project Subtotal:	$	9,559,000
14. Program Management (2% of Project Subtotal):	$	191,000
TSPLOST 2026 Project Total:	$	**9,750,000**

Operating Cost

Total Annual Net Operating Costs when Project is complete:

Only identify additional or net operating costs to be paid by ACCGov as a result of this Project. Identify the additional or net costs needed, above ACCGov's current operating budget, to operate the requested project; as well as any additional Project related revenues that would be generated. Provide budget costs for each identified category below.

Operating Costs (round to thousand)	Estimated Impact for Annual Operating Expenditures
TOTAL PROJECTED REVENUES FROM PROJECT	
PROJECTED EXPENDITURES	
1. Personnel Costs: from Appendix A	
2. Annual Utilities:	
• Natural Gas:	
• Electrical:	
• Water:	
• Sewer:	
• Phone:	
• Solid Waste Collection:	
• Other:	
3. Operating Supplies:	
4. Equipment Maintenance:	
5. Facility Maintenance:	
6. Other: Wayfinding Maintenance	5,000
7. Other: Public Art Maintenance	4,000
8. Other: Annual Maintenance	29,000
9. Other: Life Cycle Replacement	68,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	
NET OPERATING COSTS OF PROJECT:	**$ 106,000**

Project Financing

Is the proposed Project to receive funding from source(s) other than TSPLOST 2026? Yes

Total Capital Financing for Project:

If the proposed Project is to receive funding other than TSPLOST 2026, provide a listing of amounts from each of the categories listed below. Please round all dollar amounts to the nearest $1,000.

Project Sources (round to thousand)	Amount
1. TSPLOST 2026[1]:	$ 9,750,000
OTHER SOURCES	
2. ACCGov General Fund:	$ 1,224,000
3. ACCGov Enterprise Fund:	$
4. State Grant:	$
5. Federal Grant:	$
6. Previous SPLOST:	$
7. Other (describe):	$
8. Other (describe):	$
TOTAL SOURCES:	$ 10,974,000

[1] If any additional sources of funding other than TSPLOST 2026 are indicated above, please provide information related to the source here. Be specific and be prepared to provide all necessary written approvals. (For example: Roadway projects that have approval for Federal Aid and will utilize TSPLOST 2026 funding for matching funds, you would need to provide specific written approval by GDOT)

Describe the current commitments for the other sources funding this project: General Capital funds are assuming a continued annual approved budget of $244,800 towards Safe Routes to School infrastructure. The majority of these funds are earmarked for life cycle replacement costs for maintaining and replacing existing SRTS infrastructure, which will work in strong agreement with this proposed TSPLOST program.