

Submitted By: Kelly Girtz, Mayor
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Project Type: Greenway, Parks, Rails-to-Trails related projects - Leisure Services Department

Previously submitted but not selected: No
Continuation Project: No

Executive Summary: Bridge spanning the North Oconee River and trail sections, some elevated, through the existing water treatment facility. Bridge and trail sections would connect existing Greenway near Sandy Creek Nature Center to Barber Street bike/ped project, currently in design, via Alexander Street.

Project Total Cost: \$ 10,585,000

Total Operating Cost: \$ 70,000

Does this Project require the acquisition of any land? No

Project/Program Description: This project would connect the existing North Oconee River Greenway with the forthcoming Barber Street Multi-use Trail, via Alexander Street dramatically shortening travel to the Greenway and Sandy Creek Nature Center for those in the Chase, Barber and Newton Bridge corridors. The connecting trail would require a bridge over the N. Oconee River, a railroad crossing, and trail extensions (some may need to be elevated).

Staff Comments:

- 1) *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.*
- 2) *The Alexander Street greenway connector bridge pose challenges that will be costly to navigate and all work on this project should expect to premium services and fees for the entire planning, design, and construction phases. Challenges include but are not limited to the width of the FEMA mapped Floodway along north Oconee River immediate downstream of the Loop 10 bypass bridges. The majority of the proposed work is in the flood plain may require a lengthy section elevated boardwalk to reach heights required to clear the river hydraulically.*
- 3) *Existing railroad may not allow dedicated pedestrian crossings, even though there is an existing private drive crossing for Public Utilities. RR may require signalized pedestrian crossing equipment.*

- 4) *Exact location of the bridge and trail would likely need to shift to the north, closer to Loop 10 highway, avoid conflicts with the Public Utilities raw water intake and the future expansion plans for the water treatment facility.*

How is this Project recommended/included in any approved ACCGOV Land Use Plan, Master Plan, Corridor Study, or Service Delivery Plan? This is a component of the approved Greenway Network Plan.

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: This project provides safe access to those living in the Barber St. and Newton Bridge Rd. corridors to the core North Oconee River Greenway and Sandy Creek Nature Center, whereas access to SCNC is largely confined to vehicular access. For example, a resident of Rolling Ridge currently has a 3.5 mile drive to the Nature Center. This would create a bike/pedestrian route of approximately two miles to the same location.

Goal Area 1; Section E: Support & promote healthy lifestyle: moving, eating, forming healthy relationships, physical and psychological care: This dramatically enhances greenspace access for Barber St./Newton Bridge Rd. area residents, which has positive physical and psychological outcomes.

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: See Goal Area 1: D above.

Goal Area 5; Section C: Expand multi-modal Transit access to reduce auto dependency and provide greater mobility for Athens residents: Creates additional bike/ped access point for Sandy Creek Nature Center, a frequently visited public facility.

Goal Area 5; Section D: Create more usable and aesthetically pleasing corridor connections between residential and commercial areas: The commercial areas on and near Chase St., Barber St. and Newton Bridge Rd. are rapidly expanding, and this would provide access to permanent greenspace to users of those areas.

Goal Area 6; Section A: Develop well-planned new infrastructure according to future land use values and framework: Protection of river corridors and appreciation for natural spaces has been a longstanding ACC goal.

Goal Area 6; Section B: Ensure equitable access to infrastructure to enhance safety and identity: Residents in the Newton Bridge Rd./Kathwood Dr. area are currently isolated from public amenities, and this would enhance access to existing public amenities for low and moderate income residents.

Goal Area 6; Section D: Follow through on commitment to 100% Clean and Renewable Energy resolution: This would reduce motor vehicle use for those accessing Sandy Creek Nature Center and points nearby.

Goal Area 6; Section E: Address ecosystem health, infrastructure sustainability, and resilience: As additional residents can access the North Oconee River Corridor and Sandy Creek Nature Center, with its miles of trails and exhibits, they will become more familiar with the need to care for the river corridor and adjacent watershed areas.

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:	\$	
2. Design Fees: (Min.12% of New Const.; 14% of reno.; 16% for LEED proj.)	\$	780,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: (Min. Minimum of 3% of Construction Costs – used for permitting, etc. Utilize minimum of 10% if land acquisition if necessary.	\$	195,000
4. Construction:	\$	6,500,000
5. Construction Contingency: (10% of the Construction line item)	\$	650,000
6. Testing: (premium for bridge work)	\$	338,000
7. Project Management: (4% of the total budget line items above)	\$	339,000
8. Project Contingency: (10% of the total budget line items above)	\$	880,000
9. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	\$	65,000
10. Other 1: Railroad Crossing Contingency (easement, permitting, design, & construction)	\$	500,000
11. Other 2: Premium Misc. (Design, permitting, & survey)	\$	130,000
Project Subtotal:	\$	10,377,000
14. Program Management (2% of Project Subtotal):	\$	208,000
TSPLOST 2026 Project Total:	\$	10,585,000

Staff Comments on Estimate: All work will be at a premium due to location and type of work. Work will require temporary access roads, and restoration, for large equipment to construct bridge and elevated trail sections. Cost increased for RR Crossing (Construction, Design, Testing, and Misc.) and other permitting, design and construction issues that will put this work at a premium. Also, premium rates applied for (line 11) for river crossing bridges, that normally do not apply for other linear type projects, due to extra work such as: USACOE Permitting, Floodway evaluations, surveying rivers, bridge & elevated trail design, inspections and testing over water.

Project Financing

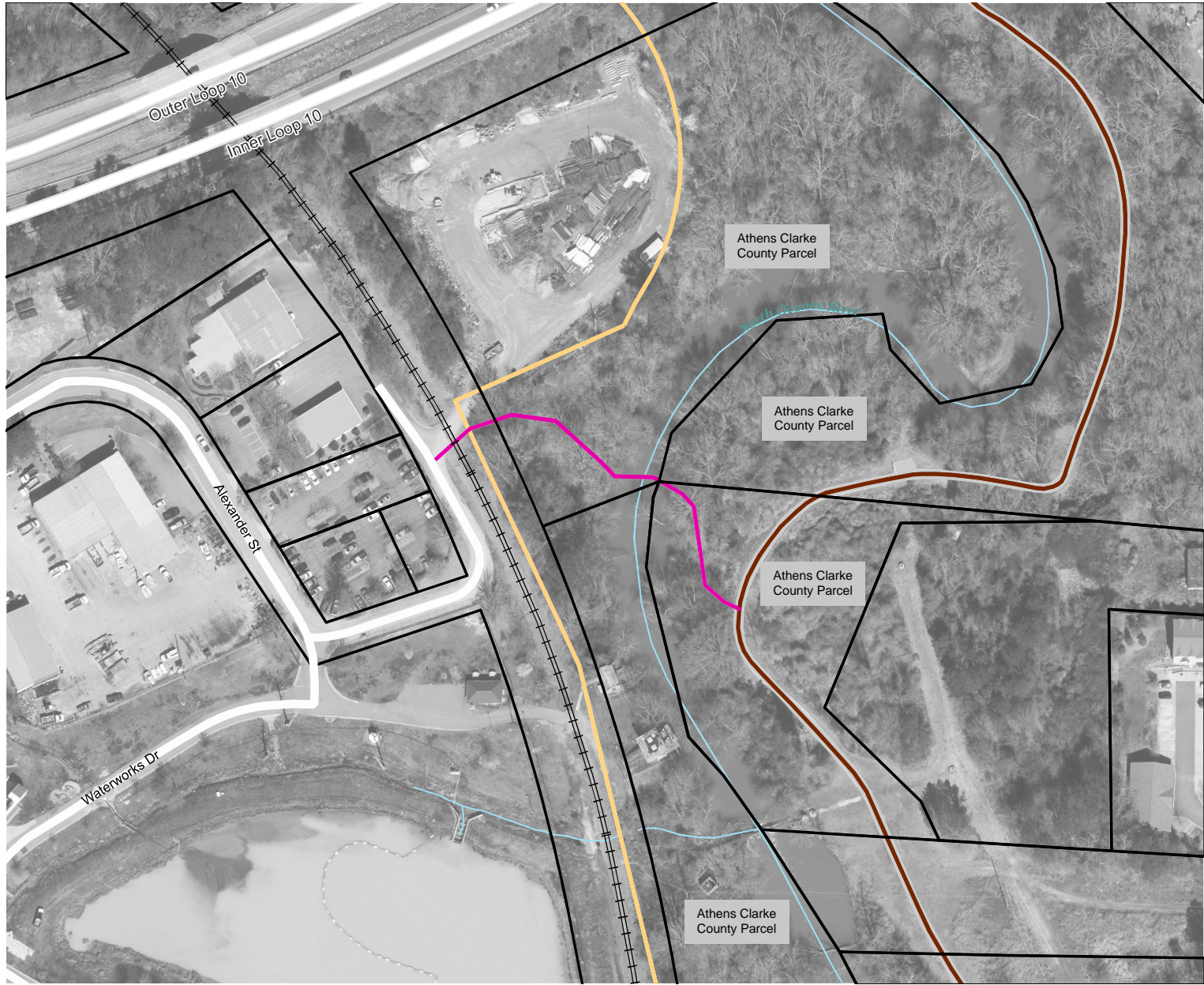
Is the proposed Project to receive funding from source(s) other than TSPLOST 2026? No

Operating Cost

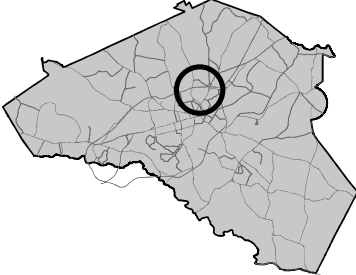
Total Annual Net Operating Costs when Project is complete:

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: Additional trail maintenance	13,000
2. Annual Utilities:	
• Natural Gas:	
• Electrical:	
• Water:	
• Sewer:	
• Phone:	
• Solid Waste Collection:	10,000
• Other:	
3. Operating Supplies:	
4. Equipment Maintenance:	
5. Facility Maintenance:	10,000
6. Other: Life Cycle Replacement	36,000
7. Other: Public Art Maintenance	1,000
8. Other:	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	
NET OPERATING COSTS OF PROJECT:	\$ 70,000



Location Map



Legend

Proposed TSPLOST Improvements 2026

Alexander St Connector (~550 l.f. of trail)

Infrastructure

- Proposed
- Existing
- Funded
- Proposed - Alternate
- ACC Parcels
- Railroad
- Buildings
- ACCUG Facilities
- ACCUG Parks

Hydrology

- Surface Water
- Stream



0 50 100 200 US Feet

Alexander St Connector

TSPLOST 2026 Application

Athens, Georgia

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