

Submitted By: Timothy Forward (residents' group)
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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: No

Executive Summary: This proposal is for an extension of the Timothy Road MUP from Rhodes Dr. Along Macon Highway to Milledge Avenue, including one river crossing. It will provide critical infrastructure for safe, active transportation linking two critical corridors and increasing access to the funded boat launch on Macon Highway.

Project Total Cost: \$ 10,545,000

Total Operating Cost: \$ 81,000

Does this Project require the acquisition of any land? Yes

What means of land acquisition will be required? Right of Way (ROW)/Permanent & Temporary easements and utility easements will be required. The existent is unknown at this time especially considering potential intersection improvements.

Project/Program Description: This project consist of building a multi-use path (MUP) connecting at the end of the Timothy Road Corridor MUP that is to be built as part of the TSPLOST 2023 efforts to Milledge Avenue. The project would involve a new MUP along Rhodes Drive and Macon Highway connecting to Milledge Avenue at the loop. The project would necessarily include a MUP bridge over the Middle Oconee River at the site of the new Macon Highway Boat Launch. Ideally the project would include a MUP on the new Macon Highway bridge but at this point there is no indication of when that bridge will be replaced, allowing for the additional lane width. If the existing bridge gets scheduled for replacement a portion of this funding could be used widen the bridge to allow for a MUP on one side and sidewalk on the other.

This will transform southwest Athens-Clarke County. Many residents along Timothy Road are 100% dependent on their cars. Once the TSPLOST 2023 multi-use path is completed, these residents will have non-driving transportation options and better access to schools, shopping, Transit, and places of worship. When the Macon Highway Boat Launch park is built, residents will need to drive in as there are no complete, connected sidewalks/bike lanes allowing for alternative transportation access. A few segments of sidewalk exist along Macon Highway on the north side past Lumpkin Street. The Southwest corner of Milledge Avenue and Macon Highway is where a sidewalk ends.

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 may include solar/storage charging options; if installed, bench and rest areas may 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. T&PW coordination with GDOT is unclear on the project schedule for the Macon Hwy bridge replacement. Understanding GDOT's commitment and proposed project scope is key to developing the project proposals and associated cost estimates.
3. The bridge work would need to be coordinated with Public Utilities due to their upcoming sewer upgrades along the river in this area.

How is this Project recommended/included in any approved ACCGOV Land Use Plan, Master Plan, Corridor Study, or Service Delivery Plan? MACORTS TIP 0019264 Macon Highway Replace bridge over Middle Oconee River Athens in Motion Tier 1 Project #81

T&PW coordination with GDOT is unclear on the project schedule for the Macon Hwy bridge replacement. Understanding GDOT's commitment and proposed project scope is key to developing the project proposals and associated cost estimates. Additional coordination with Public Utilities for sewer upgrades necessary to expand sewer capacity to the basin

How is this Project included in the Madison Athens-Clarke County Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS) long-range Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)? The bridge across the Middle Oconee River is on the MACORTS TIP list (PI 0019264)

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: Macon Highway could connect the Milledge Avenue and Timothy Road corridors and provide greater access to the Macon Highway Boat Launch park. Milledge Avenue is one of Athens' major through-roads. It connects the University of Georgia with the residential and business areas of the city of Athens. Timothy Road seeks funding for continuous multi-use paths from end to end. Updating Macon Highway is a critical segment of the ped/bike loop.

Goal Area 1; Section E: Support & promote healthy lifestyle: moving, eating, forming healthy relationships, physical and psychological care: Walking, riding bicycles, rollerblading, skateboarding, etc., are fun and healthy ways to get out of one's house and enjoy being active. The extended range afforded by the continuous ten-foot multi-use path will also free more people from their cars so they can greet and get to know neighbors.

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 project expands and improves Macon Highway with the addition of a ten-foot multi-user path. This project, if accepted, will provide non-drivers a greater range of travel options through the south western quadrant of Athens-Clarke County without needing to drive. Multi-use paths are wide enough for people walking and biking to share transportation space.

Goal Area 5; Section B: Pursue inter-city travel options to connect Athens with other cities: At present, there are few inter-city transportation options beyond the Groome Shuttle to Hartsfield Jackson Airport and Greyhound buses to Atlanta and a handful of small towns north and east of Athens. With this multi-use path it will become feasible to ride a bicycle or walk to Transit stops along Milledge Avenue and the multi-modal transportation center downtown.

Goal Area 5; Section C: Expand multi-modal Transit access to reduce auto dependency and provide greater mobility for Athens residents: Every mile of bike and pedestrian infrastructure expands multi-modal Transit access, thereby reducing auto-dependency and increasing mobility options for Athens residents.

Goal Area 5; Section D: Create more usable and aesthetically pleasing corridor connections between residential and commercial areas: Macon Highway is not the worst-looking two-lane road in Athens-Clarke County. That said, adding the multi-use path provides an opportunity to plant street trees and shrubbery, giving the road a visual lift.

Goal Area 5; Section E: Enhance safety for all modes of transportation: Multi-use paths, such as what we are proposing for Macon Highway, improve safety for all users as they separate people walking and biking from vehicular traffic.

Goal Area 6; Section A: Develop well-planned new infrastructure according to future land use values and framework: This project completes a significant piece of a potential pedestrian/bike route around Athens. A city as small as Athens should not be as car dependent as it is. City planning needs to be human centered rather than designed to move high-speed traffic through. Our lack of "Complete Streets" deprives Athens of the vitality and energy one associates with a college town.

Goal Area 6; Section B: Ensure equitable access to infrastructure to enhance safety and identity: Not every resident of Athens-Clarke County has access to a vehicle. For those who do not or cannot drive safe walking or biking are the only options for getting around. Even more important is how the multi-use path opens options for persons confined to wheelchairs or other mobility-assistance devices. Connecting Milledge Avenue to the Timothy Corridor opens opportunities for Transit access and provides safe ways for people walking and cycling to get around Athens.

Goal Area 6; Section C: Provide adequate funding for maintenance of existing and newly constructed infrastructure: Build into this proposal are anticipated operating costs. In addition, mowing alongside Timothy Road will become less dangerous for work crews as deep ditches will be eliminated in many places.

Goal Area 6; Section D: Follow through on commitment to 100% Clean and Renewable Energy resolution: Walking and riding bicycles are carbon-free activities.

Goal Area 6; Section E: Address ecosystem health, infrastructure sustainability, and resilience: People walking and rolling are not polluting and are not wearing out roadways. Being out of a car frees one to observe the natural environment and pick up stray bits of litter. This project will provide much greater access to the Macon Highway Boat Launch Park for residents who would rather leave cars at home and enjoy an active day of recreation.

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.)	\$ 800,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: (Min. Minimum of 3% of Construction Costs – used for permitting, etc. Utilize minimum of 10% if land acquisition if necessary.)	\$ 600,000
4. Construction:	\$ 6,500,000
5. Construction Contingency: (10% of the Construction line item)	\$ 650,000
6. Acquisition of Capital Equipment:	\$
7. Testing:	\$ 180,000
8. Project Management: (4% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 359,000
9. Project Contingency: (10% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 934,000
10. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	\$ 65,000
11. Other 1:	\$
12. Other 2:	\$
Project Subtotal:	\$ 10,338,000
14. Program Management (2% of Project Subtotal):	\$ 207,000
TSPLOST 2026 Project Total:	\$ 10,545,000

Staff Comments Regarding the estimate: The above budget values are based on a stand-alone bridge structure over the river independent of any GDOT or PUD projects. Land acquisition will be required.

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: 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: Public Art Maintenance	1,000
7. Other: Annual Maintenance	28,000
8. Other: Life Cycle Replacement	52,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	
NET OPERATING COSTS OF PROJECT:	\$ 81,000