



TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Planning Department  
DATE: July 1, 2019  
RE: Acceptance/Adoption of the Connect Athens Corridor Plan

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The Planning Department is pleased to present the completed Connect Athens Corridor Plan and accompanying Transportation Memo. On behalf of the contracted consultants, staff believes the document represents a comprehensive, factual, and realistic analysis of both the Atlanta Highway and Lexington Road corridors that were examined. Furthermore, this dual study provides a path forward, with identified strategies from which to achieve desired success.

For more than a year, the professional consultants, along with Athens-Clarke County Unified Government staff, engaged in a thorough process to simultaneously review two distinct, but equally important gateways that stretch almost the entire duration of Athens-Clarke County. Since original approval of the RFP and associated contract in 2017-2018, each corridor has been subjected to the stated list of objectives outlined in the scope of services. Through a balanced approach to both technical expertise and community input, the overall identified goals for each corridors' future have been clarified, vetted, and supported through accompanying methods.

When reviewing the Connect Athens Corridor Plan, the overall approach to the document was based on aspects similar to Envision Athens and the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. For example, the same five categories (people, prosperity, place, vitality, foundations) were used to help organize and distinguish information, to a degree. This also strengthens the resounding community call for our future to be dependent upon these areas of focus.

The plan recognizes similarities amongst the two corridors, given their designation as State Highway 78. As necessary, the material is also divided to demonstrate the unique characteristics of each route, and the alternative tracts forward into the future. Additionally, a separate Transportation Memo is included with the overall Connect Athens Corridor Plan to describe and highlight more specific recommendations related to the add-alternate task for traffic analysis per the RFP and contract. It is meant to suggest key priorities from Connect Athens that may be linked to or eligible for TSPLOST funding.

As this effort was originally approved by the Mayor and Commission as a contracted study, the appropriate action by the Planning Commission is to “accept” the completion of the study, or preferably, to “adopt” the plan for use in future decision-making. Since your last meeting, the



consultant has worked to make a few corrections, as well as incorporate or slightly amend any content that was discussed amongst the Planning Commission, Athens-Clarke County staff, or the general public. Prior to the July 1, 2019 regular meeting of the Planning Commission, you will all receive a list of changes to the plan since your initial review. The updated plan, in its entirety, will be available for analysis this week at the following link:

<https://connect-athens.org/>

Again, thank you all for your participation in this yearlong process. Insight offered by you as Planning Commissioners was vital, and we hope you feel as strongly as we do that this plan sets a strong foundation from which to guide our future growth and development. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Planning Department.

PLANNING & ZONING

THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY