

Submitted By: Sara Beresford
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Project Type: Streets/Roads/Bridges related projects - Transportation & Public Works Department

General Program Goal: Economic Prosperity

Previously Submitted and Rejected: Yes - SPLOST 2020

Continuation Project: No

Project Total Cost: \$ 3,288,000

Total Annual Operating Cost: \$ 1,000

Abbreviated - Project Description: This project provides funding for safety improvements at the Five Points intersection. Improvements include relocation of crosswalks with ADA accessibility, signal timing and support modifications, and pedestrian corner refuge renovations.

Project Location/Address: "Five Points" Intersection of Lumpkin, Milledge Avenue, and Milledge Circle

Is the Site currently owned by the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County? Yes

Is the Site within State Highway Rights-of-Way? Yes

Site Specific Information:

Does this Project require the acquisition of any land rights, whether existing sites, new site, easements, or Rights-of-Way? Unsure

Project/Program Description: The Five Points intersection has become a major hub of transportation and commercial activity in Athens. Five Points serves not only the entire community and surrounding counties but also visitors from around the region. According to GDOT, there are 15,700, 12,200, and 2,070 trips per day on South Milledge Avenue, South Lumpkin Street, and Milledge Circle, respectively. Surrounded by a large residential community, Five Points is one of the more walkable areas of Athens. However, user safety (vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists) in the area is a major concern. South Milledge Avenue is a principal arterial, Lumpkin Street is an urban minor collector, and Milledge Circle is an urban collector, moving cars and transit buses throughout the city, and serving as primary roads connecting UGA and downtown to the Athens Perimeter highway and beyond.

The geometry of this intersection is such that the crosswalks are unusually long, and the properties abutting the intersection are not uniformly shaped. Some of the creative solutions other communities have used to address similar problems, such as roundabouts or a complete transformation of the intersection are not feasible due to existing buildings and infrastructure. The ACC Department of Transportation and Public Works has also identified this intersection as an area of concern, and has already implemented some measures, such as signal timing adjustments, to

improve safety. The goal of this project is to implement comprehensive changes to improve the safety of the Five Points intersection for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. The proposed improvements will create a safer intersection for drivers, walkers, and cyclists; improve the safety associated with turning UGA and ACC transit buses at the intersection; and create small public spaces at the node that provide improved aesthetics and safety.

Five Points is an important transportation and commerce node for nearly all Athens residents and visitors. Many users travel through this node daily, whether commuting to UGA or downtown or crossing through town on Milledge Avenue to connect with areas served by Atlanta Highway or Prince Avenue. This project provides a much-needed opportunity to take a more comprehensive look at the intersection and improve safety for all who use it.

Project Mission Statement/Selection Criteria: The mission of this project is to improve the safety for all users (vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians) of the Five Points intersection using an approach that addresses priorities established by Envision Athens, Athens in Motion, and the 2018 Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan. The goals are to 1) create a safer intersection for drivers, walkers, and cyclists; 2) improve the safety associated with turning UGA and ACC transit buses at the intersection; and 3) create small public spaces at the node that provide improved aesthetics and safety. The following objectives, which are represented in the included sketch, will accomplish these goals:

- (a) the relocation of existing crosswalks to shorten and improve pedestrian walk time;
- (b) conversion of the existing strain poles to mast arms;
- (c) improved pedestrian and wheelchair ramps;
- (d) improved pedestrian refuges at corners;
- (e) evaluation and improvement of curb radii at key corners of the intersection;
- (f) updated signal control and timing; and
- (g) an overall reduction in car/bike/pedestrian conflict points.

This project addresses the following selection criteria: protects the community's existing transportation infrastructure investments, promotes increased usage of the transit system, including improving pedestrian access to transit facilities, and promotes health and safety for all Athenians and visitors.

How is this Project recommended/included in any approved ACCGov Land Use Plan, Master Plan, Corridor Study, or Service Delivery Plan? N/A

How is this Project included in the Madison Athens-Clarke County Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS) long-range Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)? N/A

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

How will the Project meet one or more of the Selection Criteria?

Protects the community's existing Transportation Infrastructure Investments: This project protects the users of a vital intersection in Athens and improves the overall level of service for multiple modes of transportation.

Promotes increased usage of the Transit System, including improving Pedestrian access to Transit Facilities: By improving the curb radii and increasing pedestrian safety, this project promotes increased usage of the transit system.

Promotes Health and Safety: This project improves the safety for vehicular travel, pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelchair users at the Five Points intersection.

Triple Bottom Line Impacts

Positive Benefits for the Economic Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: This project improves safety in the Five Points node, which makes the intersection and its commercial district safer. This encourages increased patronage of local businesses with less impact on vehicular traffic. The increased success of these businesses creates better wages, more job opportunities, particularly in the retail and accommodation and food services sectors, and more sales tax revenue for the entire county.

An oft-cited 2003 study (<https://ilsr.org/wp-content/uploads/files/midcoaststudy.pdf>) conducted by the Institute for Local Self Reliance found that (as summarized by the American Independent Business Alliance (<https://www.amiba.net/resources/multiplier-effect/>)):

"...for every dollar spent at a locally-owned establishment, nearly 45% of that revenue stayed in the local community with another 9% being spent elsewhere in the state. These expenditures included employee wages/benefits, inventory, supplies, and services from other local businesses, profits accrued to the local owners, state and local taxes, and charitable contributions. In contrast, for every dollar spent at a chain store, only 14% of the revenue stayed in the local community, mostly in the form of payroll. The balance of that money flows to out-of-state suppliers, or back to the parent corporation. Based on these numbers, three times as much money stays in your community when shopping at a locally-owned business vs. shopping at a chain store."

This study is one of many that indicate the same trend: locally-owned business are better for the local economy. This project will indirectly benefit locally-owned businesses, which will increase sales tax revenue and thus the prosperity of Athens-Clarke County.

Detrimental Impacts to the Economic Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: None.

Positive Benefits for the Social Well-Being of our Residents and visitors: This project will have positive benefits for residents and visitors to Athens-Clarke County. The project improves government effectiveness, in particular the Department of Transportation and Public Works, by addressing traffic impacts and safety at the Five Points intersection. The project includes the re-timing of existing signals and improves transit turning movements at the intersection. It increases pedestrian safety and decreases transit on vehicle

conflicts with cyclists. All of these line up with and support more effective Department of Transportation and Public Works' operations.

By connecting with planned alternative transportation corridors outlined in the Athens in Motion plan, the project addresses equity by providing greater access to Five Points and its amenities by the larger Athens-Clarke County community.

A safe, vibrant, walkable, more accessible Five Points enhances the livability for all of Athens. Due to its importance as a thoroughfare or destination in Athens, a safer Five Points node is important for all of Athens-Clarke County. As Athens moves towards its shared vision of strong neighborhoods, increased public safety, equitable access, healthy lifestyles and an increased range of transportation options, the Five Points node has an important role to play.

Detrimental Impacts for the Social Well-Being of our Residents and visitors: Access to the construction area may be inconvenient for all modes of transportation. Efforts will be made to provide appropriate access for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and vehicular traffic throughout the course of construction. Based on conversations with staff from the Department of Transportation and Public Works these impacts will be kept to an absolute minimum. All work will be coordinated with the Georgia Department of Transportation, the University of Georgia, law enforcement and public fire and safety agencies, utility owners, local businesses, and residents.

Positive Impacts on the Environment: The proposed project aims to make "active transportation," like pedestrian and cycling, safer in Athens. Enhanced traffic efficiency and less vehicular traffic improves local air quality and decreases the contribution of greenhouse gases. The project would incorporate some new, small green spaces, and we anticipate a net reduction in impervious areas.

Detrimental Impacts on the Environment: There will be land disturbance related to the construction, however all required Best Management Practices (BMP's) will be funded through this project to reduce negative impacts the environment. This project has limited impact to existing infrastructure. Some utility coordination will be required.

Positive/Negative Impacts on ACCGov Departments, Agencies, or other Organizations, if not covered in one of the above questions: This proposed capital improvement project meets a need for pedestrian and intersection improvements that are not currently funded by government operations or routine maintenance. The proposed safety improvements directly address concerns expressed by the Department of Transportation and Public Works, including the need to shorten existing crosswalks for improved signal operations and the addition of bike boxes to address bike safety at the intersection. This project also addresses transit concerns and movements between S. Milledge Avenue, and Lumpkin Street. The proposed improvements would have a positive impact to ACCGOV Departments, GDOT, UGA and local businesses.

Project Costs

Detailed project capital budget costs (to be funded from TSPLOST 2023 only):

Project Costs (round to thousand)	Amount
1. Land Acquisition / ROW / Easement:	\$ 900,000
2. Design Fees: (Min.12% of New Const.; 14% of reno,; 16% for LEED proj.)	\$ 280,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: (Min. Minimum of 3% of Construction Costs – used for permitting, etc. Utilize minimum of 10% if land acquisition if necessary.)	\$ 42,000
4. Construction:	\$ 1,400,000
5. Construction Contingency: (10% of the Construction line item)	\$ 140,000
6. Acquisition of Capital Equipment	\$ -
7. Testing:	\$ 42,000
8. Project Management: (4% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 113,000
9. Project Contingency: (10% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 292,000
10. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	\$ 14,000
11. Other 1:	\$
12. Other 2:	\$
Project Subtotal:	\$ 3,223,000
14. Program Management (2% of Project Subtotal):	\$ 65,000
TSPL0ST 2023 Project Total:	\$ 3,288,000

Attachments:

[Attachment 1 - Intersection Note ROW](#)

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:	
8. Other:	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	
NET OPERATING COSTS OF PROJECT:	\$ 1,000

Project Financing

Is the proposed Project to receive funding from source(s) other than TSPLOST 2023? No

Other Attachments:

[Attachment 2 - Five Points Safety Sketch](#)

Five Points Safety Proposal

Additional Information Regarding the \$900,000 Estimate for Land Acquisition and Right of Way

The estimated \$900,000 is considered to be the HIGHEST this might cost. There are very real possibilities under consideration that include purchasing only part of the parcels in question or possibly a land donation. We decided to provide the TSPLOST committee with the most conservative (highest) estimate, but want to emphasize that we believe this number will be much lower based on conversations with current landowners.

