

Submitted By: Ross Hinkle
Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission
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Project Type: Greenway, Parks, Rails-to-Trails related projects - Leisure Services Department

General Program Goal: Social Well-Being

Previously Submitted and Rejected: No

Continuation Project: Yes - TSPLOST 2018, Project 05

Project Total Cost: **\$ 43,069,000**

Total Annual Operating Cost: **\$ 353,000**

Abbreviated - Project Description: This project provides funding for the design and construction of trails at the following locations: MLK Drive trail from North Ave. to Dudley Park; Cooks Trail multi-use trail; Middle Oconee trail from Ben Burton Park to Beech Haven Park; Normaltown Connector Trail Oneta St Section.

Project Location/Address: Multiple; MLK Blvd, Cooks Trail, Middle Oconee River Burton Park to Beech Haven Park, and Normaltown Connector

Is the Site currently owned by the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County? No

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

Site Specific Information: This project has 4 locations:

- 1) MLK Drive continuation of trail from North Ave. to Dudley Park.
- 2) Cooks Trail improvements within the Cooks trail corridor from Sandy Creek Nature Center to Sandy Creek Park.
- 3) Middle Oconee trail from Ben Burton Park to Atlanta Highway.
- 4) Normaltown Connector Trail from the existing greenway trail to Normaltown.

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

Project/Program Description: The Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission was formed by the Athens-Clarke County Commission to provide a plan for protection of the waterways and riparian zones along them within the county. The Greenway Network Plan is this document and has been cited within the region and state for over 2 decades. A part of that plan is the trail system that is on the ground within the county and many more miles connecting all residents of the community. The next phase of this plan to implement includes four projects of building multiuse trail to grow this system. The first priority of segment is filling the gap of riverside trail from North Ave. to East Broad St and Dudley Park through North Oconee River Park. This segment has been submitted and approved as a priority trail within SPLOST/TSPLOST proposals and the GNP. Due to funding and other opportunities to complete other sections of trail, this segment is currently unfunded and needs support with TSPLOST 2023 funding.

Next is the re-building of Cook's Trail connecting Sandy Creek Park and Sandy Creek Nature Center as a multi-use trail in a new alignment that is less impacted by flooding. The current trail has been closed off and on for over 5 years due to catastrophic flooding. The new trail alignment would be on higher ground and be made of boardwalks and aggregate that would be more accessible to all people. With this trail rebuilt, anyone could access Sandy Creek Park from downtown Athens without a car safely. This project request would be supplemented by pursuing grants as TSPLOST funding is an effective leverage for securing state and federal grants.

The first segment of trail along the Middle Oconee River would be the third project connecting Ben Burton Park to Atlanta Highway near the future Beech Haven Park. This connector would open up access to countless neighborhoods for people to access Atlanta Highway from Mitchell Bridge Road and eventually down Tallasseee Road with the planned path in SPLPOST 2020. This connection works in collaboration with other TSPLOST 2023 proposals.

Lastly, the Normaltown Connector with the most viability is around Oneta St. This trail would connect the existing North Oconee River Greenway Trail to Normaltown through many neighborhoods.

All together these projects will impact countless residents of our community and connect them to non-vehicular ways to travel.

Project Mission Statement/Selection Criteria: The Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission is charged as the non-Right of Way multiuse trail mission of the county and the plan that houses these segments. Through the GNP and public input on the 2020 map revisions approved by Mayor and Commission, all of these segments received positive support. The completion of these 4 areas of trail construction will bring new areas of the community into town and spread the wealth of the trail system past the urban service district. These connections also break age barriers for youth that cannot drive and others too uncomfortable with sharing the road with trucks and cars. By completing these projects, the county will have another large step towards complete access to the network of bike-ped infrastructure.

*Staff Comment: Given the challenges and sensitive nature of the habitat along these two areas, restoration could run as high as \$100,000 per mile. This would need to be included in the cost estimates or added into the project. An ecological restoration plan should be included from the beginning of the project and should indicate specific habitat goals and objectives that are part of an overall habitat management plan. Note: In accordance with the Mayor and Commission approved Land Conservation Acquisition (Greenspace) Policy, proposed activities on greenspace properties must be reviewed and signed off as meeting Policy goals by the Sustainability Office prior to design.

How is this Project recommended/included in any approved ACCGov Land Use Plan, Master Plan, Corridor Study, or Service Delivery Plan? Greenway Network Plan Athens In Motion - Existing Infrastructure Macorts - Existing Infrastructure Envision Athens Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Plan 2018 ACC Unified Government Comprehensive Plan 2018.

How is this Project included in the Madison Athens-Clarke County Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS) long-range Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)? Found cited as part of the Athens Greenway trail both in expansion in project R-11 and in foundational text of the document.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

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

Promotes the Goal of improving Equitability of capital improvements throughout the Community:

All four areas of this project extend free transportation opportunities further across the community. These improvements would be within several commission districts. Altogether, districts 2,3,5,6, and 7 would now have more bike-ped connectivity within them and a connection is made to the boundary of district 10. These projects also border countless residential areas that are usually easily accessible by foot or bike such as along 441, and Atlanta Highway. Multiuse trails are the easiest way to provide people mobility within their community with the most affordable and obtainable modes of transportation.

Protects the community's existing Transportation Infrastructure Investments: One area of concentration for this project is a true rebuilding of a failed infrastructure investment; Cooks Trail. This visionary trail within Athens has stood the test of time for many years, but with aged infrastructure and more intense flooding, the test of time has won against the trail. With rebuilding this trail and taking this opportunity to remove barriers for all users, this transportation infrastructure will be re-established. The other segments in this project also work to keep the existing trail system relevant and meeting the demands of the community.

Reduces Pavement Maintenance deficit: The Greenway Trail system as a whole provides non-motorized travel and commute alternatives. This is cited in the Athens in Motion study conducted on how comfortable people are to travel on roads by bike or walk on roads that do not have a sidewalk. Across the whole county, there are many roads outside of the downtown area that people feel unsafe using unless in a car. Accessible trail systems for non-automobile commuting provides a safe way for ACC citizens to move about the community reducing roadway usage and thus less maintenance requirements.

Promotes the Upgrade and Continued Use of Alternative Transportation Facilities: The Greenway Trail system is the original "Alternative Transportation Facility (ATF)." This project spread strategically across the ACC community increases the effective use of the alternative transportation by what is expected to be a major increase in users afforded the connections to be upgraded.

Promotes increased access to existing public facilities: These trail construction projects create safe access to the trail system within Athens. They also provide access to public parks, amenities, and services. By filling the gap of trail along Dr. MLK Jr. Boulevard, a safe and easy connection is made between Sandy Creek Nature Center, the existing trail, Downtown, Firefly Trail, the Multimodal Center, North Oconee River Park, and Dudley Park. Couple that with a multi-use Cook's Trail, and those same facilities are now connected to Sandy Creek Park. That network can grow even further when the section of trail from Normaltown is built. The Middle Oconee River Trail segment is anchored by 2 parks, Ben Burton and Beech Haven (future). Combined, this project is a critical expansion of the trail system within Athens.

Promotes increased usage of the Transit System, including improving Pedestrian access to Transit Facilities: The Multi-Use trail system within Athens compliments the active (bus) transit system. When people can use either system to have options or increase access, the community wins. People can walk along a trail to access a bus stop or even the multi-modal center off of the Greenway Trail.

Increases capital for Transit Services or expands the Transit System: This trail project connects park & ride locations across the county including creating some opportunities for future park & ride lots. This project will also allow access to new destination by bus since service currently does not go North on 441 to Sandy Creek Park.

Maintains or Improves Air Quality: Since the Greenway Trail is a non-motorized trail, the over 250,000 users of the trail are not adding to the air pollution associated with the use of fossil fuels. Opportunities for local and accessible non-motorized trails for biking, fun runs, and other forms of recreational activities reduces the need for ACC citizens to commute out of the county for such activities. The trail corridors protect greenspace providing for environmental benefits such as clean air, storm water retention, and provide educational opportunities about wildlife corridors and environmental stewardship.

Reduces vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion: The Greenway Trail is an Alternate Transportation Facility that provides an alternate to commuters and recreationists using vehicles on the roads of ACC. Similarly, more trails in the system increase that access and decrease travel to reach the public transportation system allowing more people to park and ride to work on the trail system.

Reduces time spent traveling in vehicles: By way of providing an alternate to driving or by allowing park & bike/walk options, trails reduce time spent traveling in vehicles for work, for recreation, and to reach destinations such as parks, services, and community greenspaces.

Continues TSPLOST 2018 Corridor Improvements or transportation related safety improvements: This project will continue to cover an unfunded portion of TSPLOST 2018 project 5 as well as building more portions of the Greenway Trail system. All non-vehicular trails for bike and pedestrian travel are safe alternatives to automobile commutes, especially as our community grows and traffic increases on our main thoroughfares.

Promotes Health and Safety: The Greenway corridor and the trails through it provide safe and healthy opportunities for individuals and families to recreate away from vehicles and along a main river in Athens. Without this trail system and the corridor that accompanies it, the flood plains of Athens would not be retained for the use of all in the community. With this free and equitable extension of the trail system, community members have access to places to walk, run, and exercise away from vehicles and vehicle emissions. People also have the ability to use self-powered vehicles like bikes or walking to commute to work. The value of these outdoor areas has been fully demonstrated during the past pandemic year by providing a safe space for citizens to get out for exercise and recreation.

Continues Sidewalk & Multi-Use Trail construction: All areas of this project continue multi-use trail construction by expanding the Greenway Network to new parts of the community.

Implements components of an updated Greenway Network Plan: This project is the implementation of the GNP. All of these sections of trail are high-priority trail segments based on public comment over years of revisions to the GNP. Every area of this project have been identified as high priority in one alignment or another since at least 2016.

Triple Bottom Line Impacts

Positive Benefits for the Economic Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: This project will continue to provide access for residents to move into and away from the downtown area and have access to work and services via modes of transportation other than personal vehicles. The Greenway Trail is the flagship ATF for Athens recognized throughout the region and state. The trail has been featured in many tourism materials (print and otherwise) and makes ACC attractive to people interested in moving to the area. These project areas extend the reach and connectivity of the commercial districts. Another important aspect is the connection to several TADs. This will greatly enhance non-automobile access to several areas throughout the county.

Detrimental Impacts to the Economic Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: This project has no negative impacts on the economic prosperity of ACC.

Positive Benefits for the Social Well-Being of our Residents and visitors: The Greenway Trail is a linear park connecting places and people in a space where everyone is welcome. Multi-Use trail connects many major roadways and parts of town without any sidewalks on the main roads. When people are able to access their community and public resources, they live healthier lives. These projects are important for providing access to a number of communities that have not received SPLOST or TSPLOST capital investments. This experience and access are afforded not only to ACC citizens but also to our student population, game day visitors, or other visitor can enjoy the positive, immersive experience of the Greenway Trail.

Detrimental Impacts for the Social Well-Being of our Residents and visitors: Completing this project has no Detrimental Impacts for the Social Well-Being of our Residents and visitors.

Positive Impacts on the Environment: The Greenway Corridor is more than just a trail, it offers a protected riparian zone along our rivers. These greenspaces are made accessible for recreational and educational purposes by the trail through them. As a package of recreational greenspace and natural area protection they offer a major environmental asset to the community. They provide areas of natural vegetation and wildlife habitat. They protect the river and riparian areas from further development. The natural vegetation soils of the riparian zones reduce the impact of runoff from developed areas helping to maintain water quality. They also reduce the flooding potential during major storm event. These areas also provide safe areas and corridors for the movement of native wildlife.

Detrimental Impacts on the Environment: There is no part of this project that has Detrimental Impacts on the Environment when construction is executed in an appropriate manner.

Positive/Negative Impacts on ACCGov Departments, Agencies, or other Organizations, if not covered in one of the above questions: Completion of this project increases the reach of the Greenway Trail System within the county. The Leisure Services Department maintains this system and needs the operational funding outlined within this proposal. Also, eventual capital reinvestment will be needed in 40-50 years as the trails will need to be properly maintained.

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:	\$ 987,000
2. Design Fees: (Min.12% of New Const.; 14% of rno,; 16% for LEED proj.)	\$ 3,307,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: (Min. Minimum of 3% of Construction Costs – used for permitting, etc. Utilize minimum of 10% if land acquisition if necessary.)	\$ 827,000
4. Construction:	\$ 27,555,000
5. Construction Contingency: (10% of the Construction line item)	\$ 2,756,000
6. Acquisition of Capital Equipment	\$ -
7. Testing:	\$ 827,000
8. Project Management: (4% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 1,451,000
9. Project Contingency: (10% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 3,771,000
10. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	\$ 278,000
11. Other 1: Habitat Restoration and Hazard Tree Management	\$ 465,000
12. Other 2:	\$
Project Subtotal:	\$ 42,224,000
14. Program Management (2% of Project Subtotal):	\$ 845,000
TSPLOST 2023 Project Total:	\$ 43,069,000

Attachments:

[Attachment 1 - Cost Estimate](#)

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	133,000
2. Annual Utilities:	
• Natural Gas:	
• Electrical:	1,000
• Water:	1,000
• Sewer:	
• Phone:	1,000
• Solid Waste Collection:	1,000
• Other:	
3. Operating Supplies:	2,000
4. Equipment Maintenance:	
5. Facility Maintenance:	2,000
6. Other: Hazard Tree Program and Habitat Restoration	166,000
7. Other: Landscape Division Operations	45,000
8. Other: Public art maintenance (minimum)	1,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	353,000
NET OPERATING COSTS OF PROJECT:	\$ 353,000

Project Financing

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

New Staffing

Position	Title	Hourly Rate	# of Hours /wk	# of Positions	Total Annual Expense
Full Time	Program Leader - Leisure Services			1	\$ 66,521
Full Time	Grounds Worker - Landscape Division			1	\$ 44,700
Part Time	Park Assistant	17	24	1	\$ 21,216

Program Leader - Leisure Services – Program Leader - Full-Time position responsible for trail inspection, trail work, volunteer supervision, work orders, storm clearing, programs along the trail, and community outreach. This position works for the supervisor of the trails and will supervise park assistants.

Grounds Worker - Landscape Division – Grounds Worker - (Landscape Division of Central Services) Responsible for general upkeep of trail corridors typically 5' off either side of the trail for regular weekly maintenance of grass, mulch, edging, etc. General upkeep extends to tree pruning and removal vertically from the ground. Removes leaves, storm blown trees, limbs, and controls invasive plants within the corridor. Informs supervisor of hazard trees outside of ability and equipment available to ensure patron safety.

Park Assistant – Park Assistant - Responsible for monthly trail inspections, daily trash routes, cleaning, litter pickup, and assisting with any activities Full-Time staff needs assistance with such as spotting while using a chainsaw or large trash pickups.

Site Criteria and Standards

Current Property Owner (if applicable):

Minimum acreage necessary for Project. TBD

Topography: TBD

Estimated cost per acre: TBD

Location/Accessibility

Define location relative to the Project's service area that best meets the Goals and Selection Criteria.

The project area creates access to public facilities across the county by connecting to the existing Greenway Trail System and Firefly Trail. All lines of the Greenway Network Plan are focused on the ACC Commissioned and defined mission of the Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission which includes the riparian zones of the rivers and tributaries connecting them.

If necessary to meet the Goals and Selection Criteria, describe what types of vehicular access will be required.

This is a trail construction project for bike and pedestrian use. When these facilities are constructed, they are built to a standard to allow access by maintenance and emergency vehicles. The construction standards are designed to allow access by emergency services and for the necessary maintenance access.

If necessary to meet the Goals and Selection Criteria, describe what types of pedestrian access will be required.

This segment of trail is intended for bike and pedestrian access and use. By tying to existing multi-use trails, public spaces, and public amenities, this project increases the access to more neighborhoods and parts of the county.

If necessary to meet the Goals and Selection Criteria, describe what types of Bicycle access will be required.

This segment of trail is intended for bike and pedestrian access and use. By tying to existing multi-use trails, public spaces, and public amenities, this project increases the access to more neighborhoods and parts of the county.

Oconee Rivers Greenway Improvements

Conceptual Cost Estimate

8/12/2021

MULTI-USE TRAIL - North Oconee River Trail - North Avenue to Dudley Park

Erosion Control	\$90,520.00
Trail Construction	\$1,123,805.00
Signage and Site Furniture	\$22,051.00
Sub-Total	\$1,236,376.00

MULTI-USE TRAIL - North Oconee River Trail - Cooks Trail

Erosion Control	\$519,177.00
Trail Construction	\$7,133,250.00
Signage and Site Furniture	\$34,688.00
Sub-Total	\$7,687,115.00

MULTI-USE TRAIL - Middle Oconee River Trail - Ben Burton Park to Beech Haven

Erosion Control	\$176,272.80
Trail and Bridge Construction	\$7,142,851.20
Signage and Site Furniture	\$27,168.40
Sub-Total	\$7,346,292.40

MULTI-USE TRAIL - North Oconee River Trail - Normaltown Connector

Erosion Control	\$127,247.00
Trail and Bridge Construction	\$7,111,234.00
Signage and Site Furniture	\$42,959.25
Sub-Total	\$7,281,440.25
Grand Total	\$23,551,223.65

Construction General Conditions (7%)

\$1,648,585.66

Construction Overhead and Profit (10%)

\$2,355,122.37

TOTAL

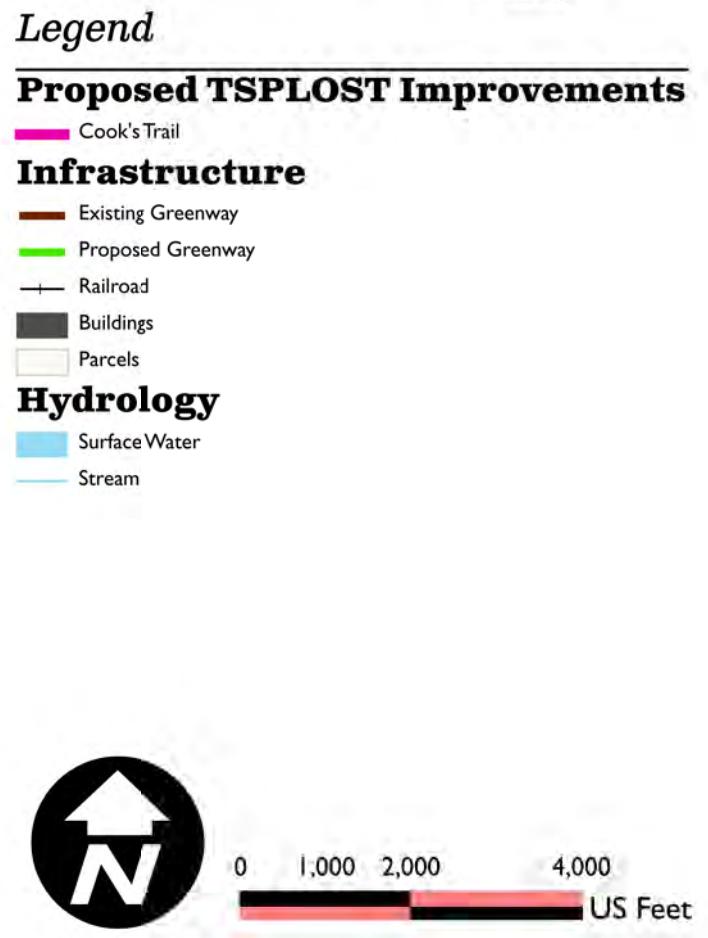
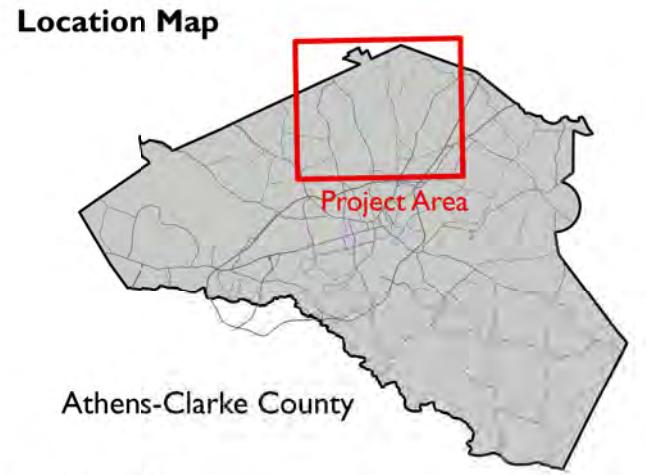
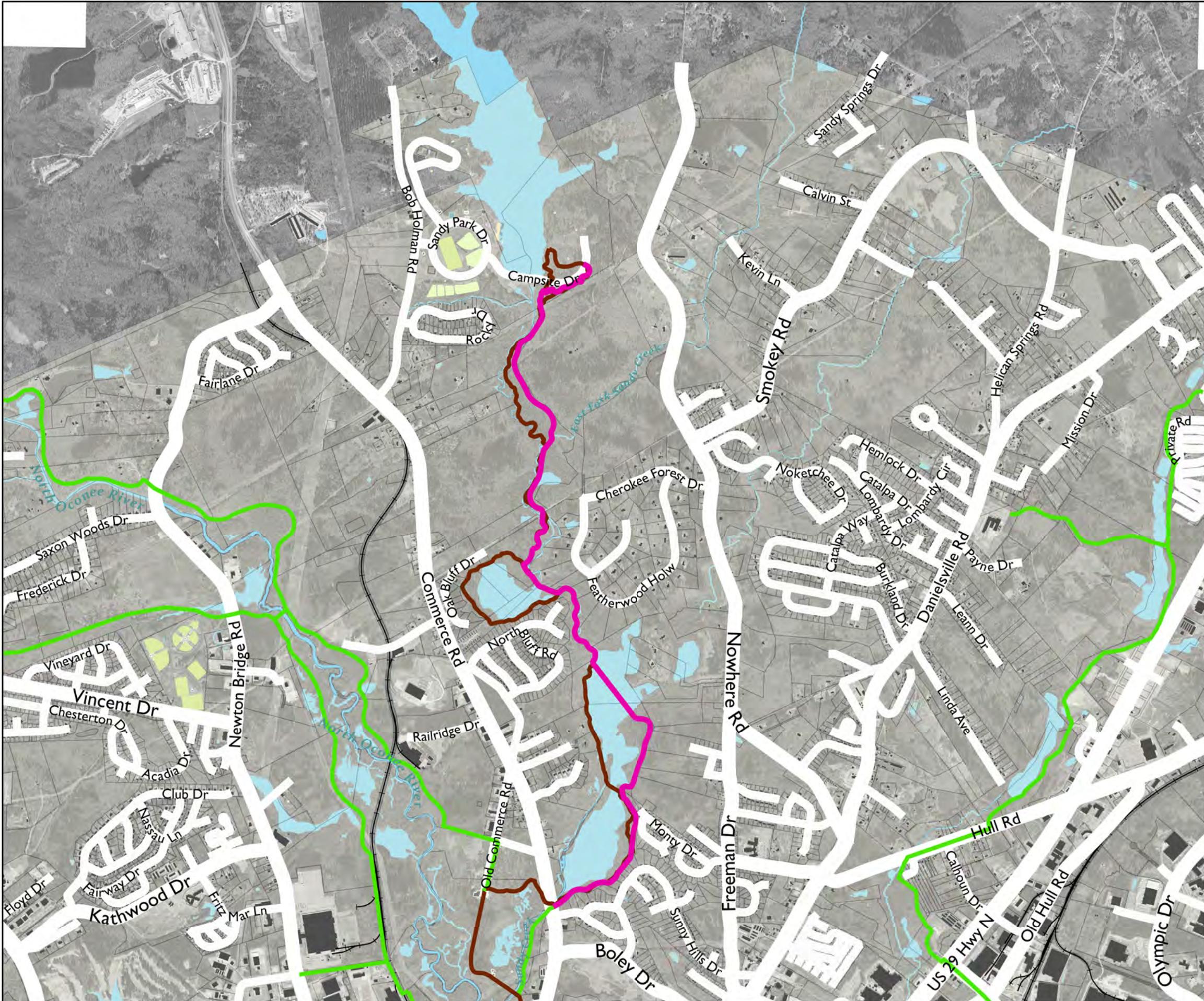
\$27,554,931.67

Project Cost round to thousand)

ORGC Greenway Improvements

Rounded #

1. Land Acquisition / ROW / Easement: Estimated value of property.	\$987,000
2. Design Fees Minimum of 12% of Construction costs for New Construction	\$3,307,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: Minimum of 3% of Construction Costs – used for permitting, etc. Utilize minimum of 10% if land acquisition if necessary.	\$827,000
4. Construction: Provide a detailed cost estimate of this component.	\$27,555,000
5. Construction Contingency: Calculated at 10% of the Construction line item. If additional Construction Contingency is needed, use one of the "Other" fields below.	\$2,756,000
6. Acquisition of Capital Equipment	\$0
7. Testing Minimum of 3% of construction costs for projects whose construction component is over \$1 million and 5% for those whose construction component between \$1 million and \$500,000 and 10% of construction costs for projects less than \$500,000.	\$827,000
8. Project Management Calculated at 4% of the total budget line items above.	\$1,451,000
9. Project Contingency Calculated at 10% of the total budget line items above. If additional Project Contingency is needed, use one of the "Other" fields below.	\$3,771,000
10. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	\$276,000
11. Other	\$0
12. Other	\$0
Project Subtotal:	\$41,757,000
13. Program Management (2% of Project Subtotal):	\$836,000
TSPLOST 2023 Project Total:	\$42,593,000



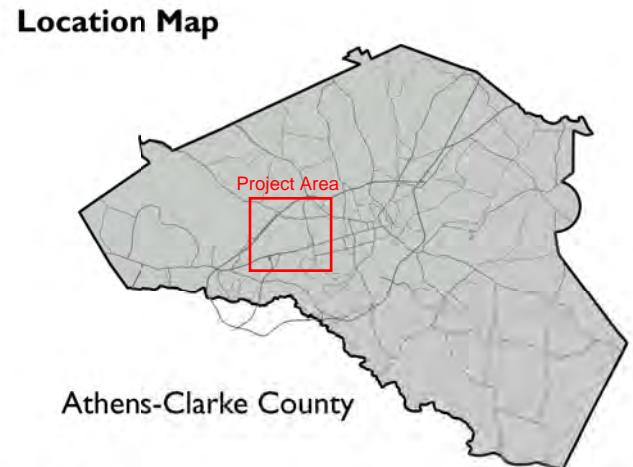
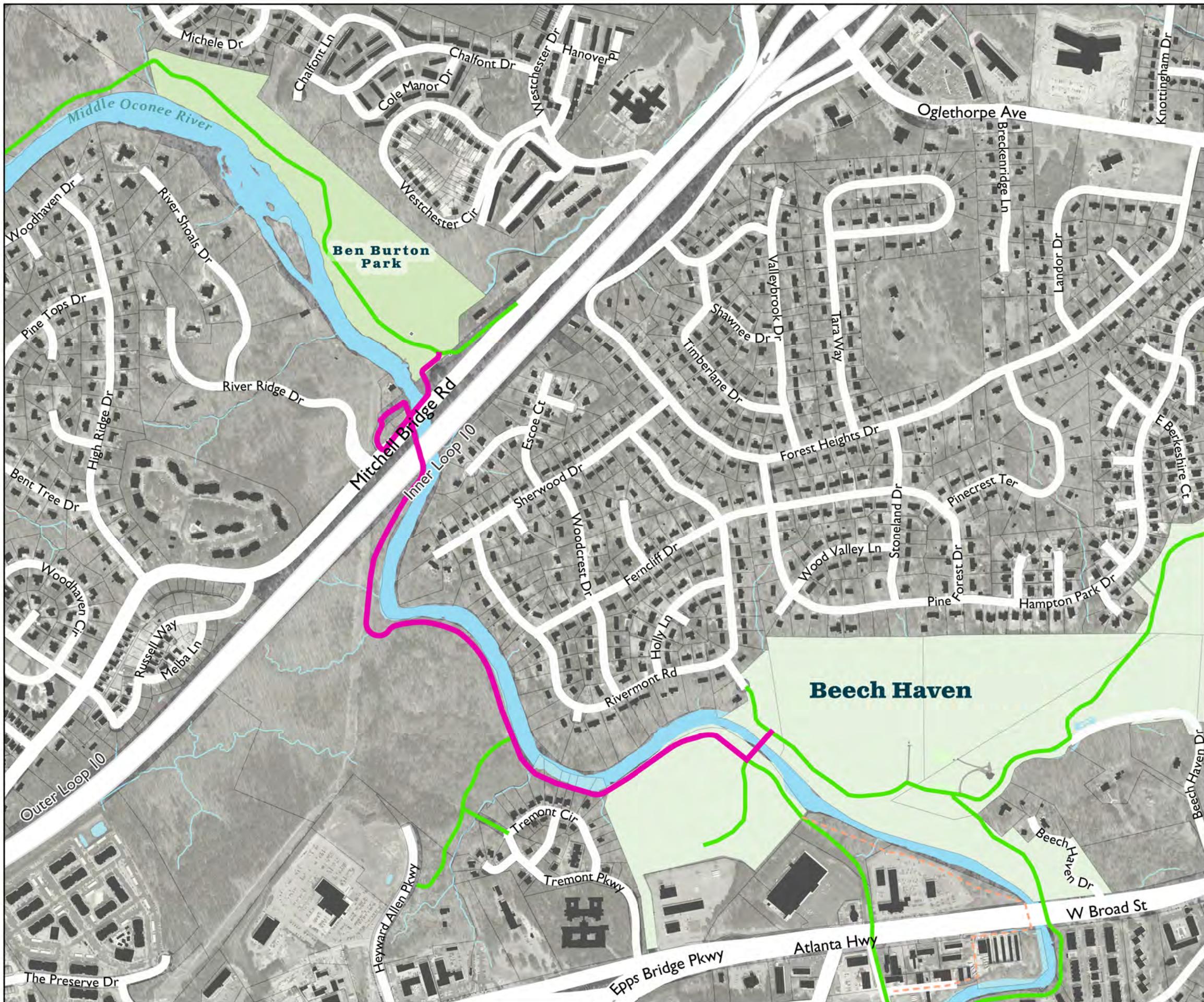
Cook's Trail

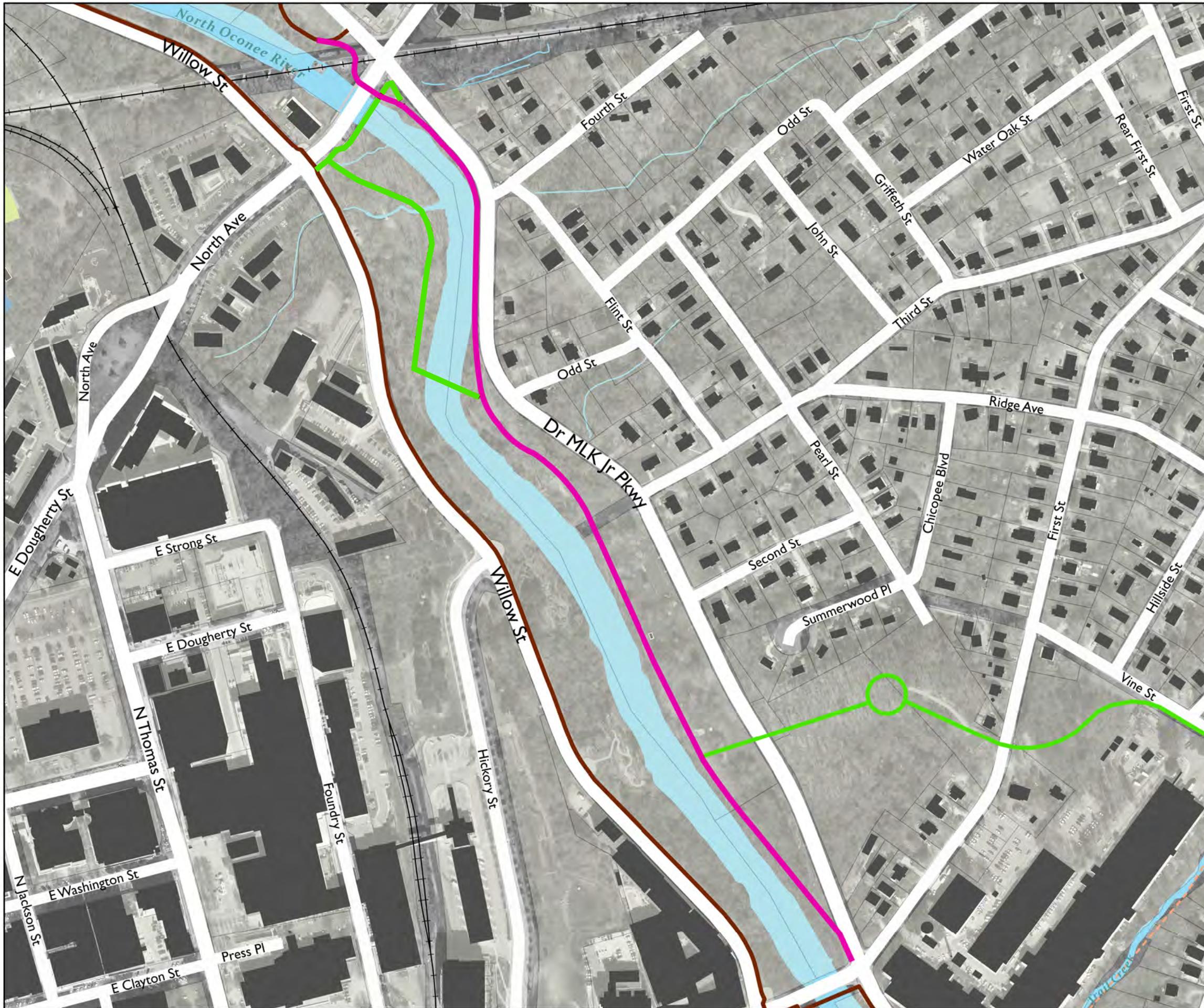
TSPLOST 2023 Application

Athens, Georgia

August 13, 2021

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Location Map



Legend

Proposed TSPLOST Improvements

— Greenway Extension - North Avenue to Dudley Park

Infrastructure

— Existing Greenway

— Proposed Greenway

— Proposed - Alternate

— Railroad

— Buildings

— Parcels

— ACCUG Property

Hydrology

— Surface Water

— Stream



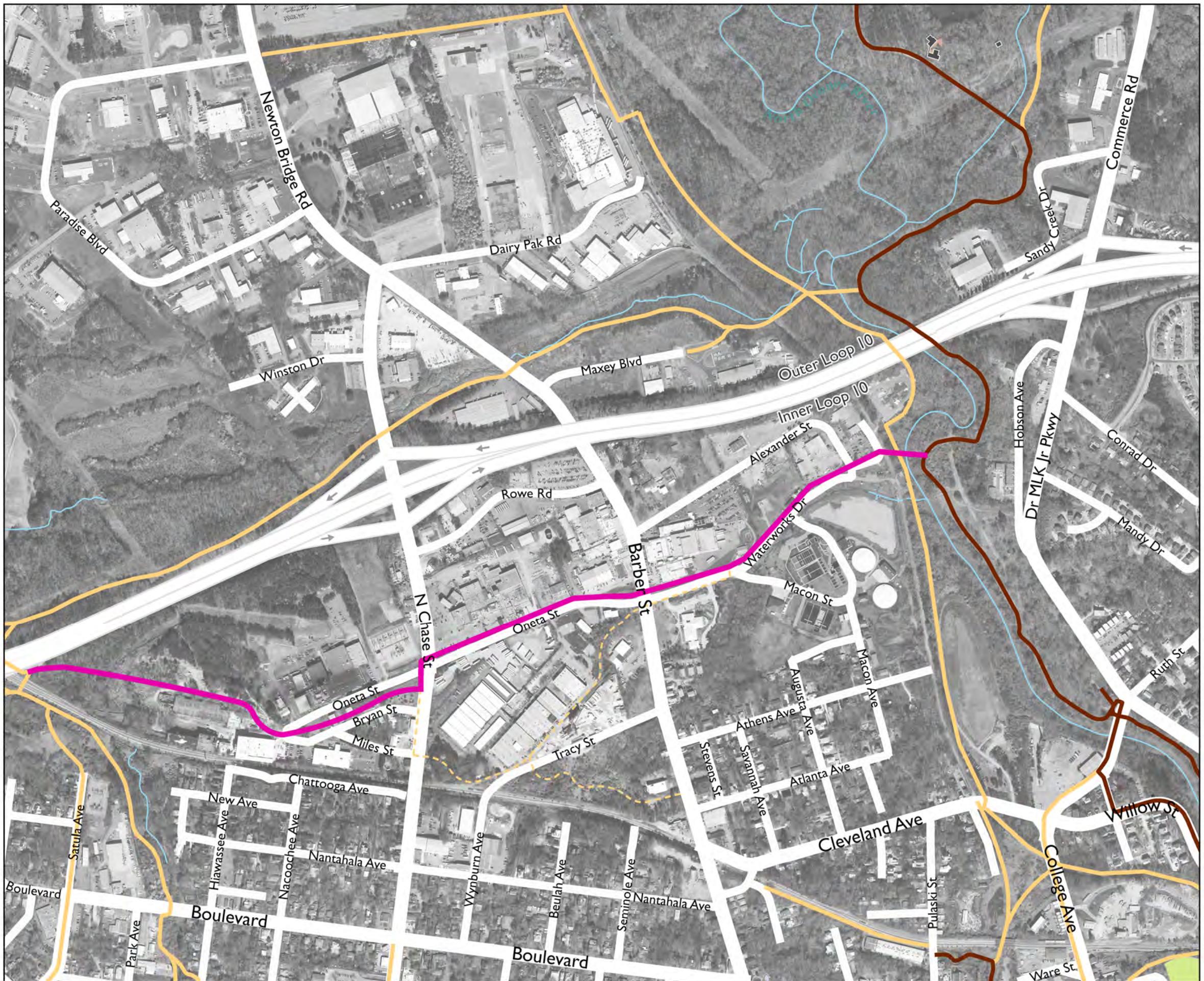
**Greenway Extension
North Avenue to Dudley Park**

TSPLOST 2023 Application

Athens, Georgia

August 13, 2021

Sheet 1 of 1



Location Map



Legend

Proposed TSPLIST Improvements

— Normaltown Connector

Infrastructure

— Proposed Greenway

— Existing Greenway

— Proposed Greenway - Alternate Route

— Railroad

— Buildings

— Parcels

— ACCUG Facilities

— ACCUG Parks

Hydrology

— Surface Water

— Stream



0 325 650 1,300 US Feet

Normaltown Connector

TSPLIST 2023 Application

Athens, Georgia

August 13, 2021

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