

Submitted By: Athens in Motion Commission
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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: Yes - TSPLOST 2023; Neighborhood Small Sidewalks Program
Continuation Project: No

Executive Summary: This program would fund Athens in Motion bike/ped/safety projects that are smaller in nature and could be implemented quicker than traditional long linear projects. The Program would include projects that would increase safety by closing gaps in the sidewalk and bike lane networks in the county, increase ADA conformance, allow new ideas to be tested (pilot projects) and allow plan street reconfigurations that would improve safety. (This would be Sidewalk and Bicycle Lane gap completion Program because there would be multiple subprojects and no pre-defined locations.)

Project Total Cost: \$ 18,337,000

Total Operating Cost: \$ 34,000

Does this Project require the acquisition of any land? Unsure

Project/Program Description: The focus of this program is to create a fund that would be used to make fixes to the existing network of active transportation improving community connections and safety. The 5 aspects of the project are:

- Filling sidewalk gaps in the network
- Filling bike lane gaps in the network
- Fixing ADA deficiencies in the network
- Implementing quick build pilot projects that would test street reconfigurations meant to improve active transportation safety without investing in permanent changes that cannot be reversed easily.
- Planning for improving road configurations to facilitate vehicular transportation and active mobility safety.

Identifying all of the gaps in our sidewalk and bike lane network is already underway as part of the county's Safe Streets for All Program. Many of the gaps already identified range from 50 feet to several blocks long. The fixes selected would be ones that could be addressed and completed quickly.

Many projects within the current TSPLOST program take years to complete. These complex projects require many resources, significant planning and challenging executions causing the public to wonder what is going on before they see any physical activity related to the project. Executing simpler fixes will enhance our active transportation network, reduce vehicular traffic and quickly give the public tangible examples of where their TSPLOST monies are being spent.

By creating continuous pathways for pedestrians, cyclists and users of other active transportation (ie. Electric scooters, onewheels, etc.) we will reduce the interaction with motor vehicles and expand our overall network. With the current gap situations, pedestrians must either venture into areas of vehicular traffic or create "goat paths" along the side of the road until they reach the next segment of sidewalk. Cyclists and scooter users must enter vehicular traffic lanes until they can enter another area with bike lanes slowing traffic and increasing risk of an accident or ride on the sidewalk increasing the chance of pedestrian/bike accidents.

Staff Comment: 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.

How is this Project recommended/included in any approved ACCGOV Land Use Plan, Master Plan, Corridor Study, or Service Delivery Plan? Athens in Motion Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan and Safe Streets for All Plan

How is this Project included in the Madison Athens-Clarke County Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS) long-range Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)? While some dollars for this project could be used to partner with GDOT on MACORTS 2050 projects where bike/ped facilities are planned, it is recommended this smaller bucket of funds be used for local roads. However it is a possibility. (For example, consider a shared pilot project opportunity on the GDOT-owned section of Prince similar the one conducted on the locally owned side).

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: Currently many of our communities are disconnected from the active transport network within the county due to gaps in the sidewalk and bike lanes. This can cause the community to be isolated making it harder for individuals to access services/activities by a means other than a motor vehicle. By closing these gaps individuals will be connected to other communities and their community will be more accessible by others thus improving the welcoming aspect of the area.

Goal Area 1; Section E: Support & promote healthy lifestyle: moving, eating, forming healthy relationships, physical and psychological care: Connecting sidewalks and bike lanes increases the safety and comfort for people walking and cycling. A common complaint in Athens is that sidewalks end abruptly or are impeded by utility poles and signs. Bike lanes often end, forcing cyclists into the roadway with cars. Many of these gaps are of short distance which implies a lack of care for non-drivers' safety and comfort.

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: The primary objective of this project is to do exactly what is stated in this goal. The project will identify locations of the greatest gaps in sidewalks and bike facilities exist and close them to ensure residents can get from point A to point B safely. It will also identify and fix areas where obstacles exist that prevent residents with disabilities from moving and enjoying a healthy lifestyle.

Goal Area 5; Section B: Pursue inter-city travel options to connect Athens with other cities: Athens in Motion focuses on improving local infrastructure, such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and shared-use paths, to make it safer and easier for residents to connect to regional transportation options. By enhancing active transportation infrastructure, we help people safely access inter-city travel hubs, enabling better regional connectivity and offering more travel choices, while supporting sustainable transportation options for everyone.

Goal Area 5; Section C: Expand multi-modal Transit access to reduce auto dependency and provide greater mobility for Athens residents: Expanding safe, multimodal options by connecting the existing options will reduce auto dependency and supports existing transit services. By creating a more walkable, bike-friendly corridor that connects neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces, this project encourages sustainable commuting choices and access to transit, enhancing mobility for all.

Goal Area 5; Section D: Create more usable and aesthetically pleasing corridor connections

between residential and commercial areas: Expanding safe, multimodal options by connecting existing options will create a more walkable, bike-friendly corridor that connects residential and commercial areas. This project will focus, short term, on the identifying and filling the gaps that prevent residents from using active transportation to reach commercial areas. For the long term, the project will be used to test new road configurations to improve resident's ability to access commercial areas safely.

Goal Area 5; Section E: Enhance safety for all modes of transportation: This project will enhance safety for all modes of transportation by creating continuous pathways for disabled individuals, pedestrians, cyclists and other active transportation users preventing them from having to enter vehicular traffic areas when there is no sidewalk or separate lane for them to use. This will also improve safety for users of vehicular transportation by reducing the potential for interaction with citizens using active transportation.

Goal Area 6; Section A: Develop well-planned new infrastructure according to future land use values and framework: This project will improve the existing infrastructure to meet future land use values and framework by giving citizens safe modes of active transportation. The project aligns with the Athens in Motion Plan's vision for sustainable growth, enhancing mobility in a way that meets long-term active transportation needs as the county grows. Vibrant community and business districts have safe facilities for active transportation.

Goal Area 6; Section B: Ensure equitable access to infrastructure to enhance safety and identity: Equitable access is ensured by providing safe infrastructure for all users, particularly underserved residents who rely on active and/or public transit. Connected, continuous walkways and bike infrastructure will ensure Clarke County is accessible, safe, and welcoming for people of all ages and abilities. Disabled residents who rely on wheelchairs will be able to use and enjoy an obstruction free transportation network. An equity criterion is a major factor in the subproject selection process.

Goal Area 6; Section C: Provide adequate funding for maintenance of existing and newly constructed infrastructure: Funding for this project includes planning for the future maintenance of upgraded sidewalks, bike facilities, and pedestrian safety measures. By ensuring a long-term maintenance plan, the project will create sustainable infrastructure that serves current and future residents reliably and equitably.

Goal Area 6; Section D: Follow through on commitment to 100% Clean and Renewable Energy resolution: The primary goal of this project is to support active, carbon-free transportation modes like walking and biking, which align with Athens' 100% Clean and Renewable Energy resolution. By promoting sustainable transportation, this project contributes to lowering vehicle emissions and supports a cleaner, healthier Athens.

Goal Area 6; Section E: Address ecosystem health, infrastructure sustainability, and resilience: The project has the potential to emphasize sustainable design through the Pilot Project pillar and Planning for Improving Road Configurations, ensuring upgrades to sidewalks and bike paths that

reduce traffic congestion, enhance stormwater management, and improve urban resilience. By prioritizing infrastructure that supports ecosystem health, this project helps build a greener, more resilient community.

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.)	\$	1,440,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: (Min. Minimum of 3% of Construction Costs – used for permitting, etc. Utilize minimum of 10% if land acquisition if necessary.	\$	360,000
4. Construction:	\$	12,000,000
5. Construction Contingency: (10% of the Construction line item)	\$	1,200,000
6. Testing:	\$	360,000
7. Project Management: (4% of the total budget line items above)	\$	624,000
8. Project Contingency: (10% of the total budget line items above)	\$	1,623,000
9. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	\$	120,000
10. Other 1:	\$	
11. Other 2:	\$	
Project Subtotal:	\$	17,977,000
14. Program Management (2% of Project Subtotal):	\$	360,000
TSPLOST 2026 Project Total:	\$	18,337,000

Staff Comment regarding the estimate: Each location would present a different cost estimate based on the conditions for each site. This sites for each improvement effort have not been determined yet. The estimate provided above will be used to complete as many gaps as possible until the funds run out.

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: Annual Maintenance	22,000
7. Other: Life Cycle	11,000
8. Other: Public Art Maintenance	1,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	
NET OPERATING COSTS OF PROJECT:	\$ 34,000

Project Financing

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