

**THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM**

SUBJECT: TSPLOST 2026 Final Projects List

DATE: December 10, 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The requested action is to approve the projects list needed for a resolution calling for a referendum to be held on May 19, 2026 for imposition of TSPLOST 2026.

BUDGET INFORMATION: N/A

Revenues: \$239,000,000

Expenses: \$239,000,000

Operating Cost Impact: \$695,500

COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON: January 6, 2026

PURPOSE:

To request that the Mayor and Commission:

- a. Approve the TSPLOST 2026 Final Projects List for a Program in the amount of \$239,000,000 (**Attachment #1**); and,
- b. Authorize the Mayor and staff to execute all related contracts and documents.

HISTORY:

1. Since 1985, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACCGov) or the former Clarke County Government has considered eight SPLOST referenda, seven of which were approved, and three TSPLOST referenda, two of which were approved.
2. On July 31, 2012, a referendum was held for a regional TSPLOST in Northeast Georgia. While the referendum failed on a regional level, Athens-Clarke County voters favored the initiative by a margin of 51.72% Yes to 48.28% No.
3. On April 26, 2016, O.C.G.A 48-8-260 became effective, allowing single counties and the municipalities within them to hold a county-wide referendum to impose a special purpose local option sales tax for transportation purposes (TSPLOST).
4. On November 7, 2017, the TSPLOST 2018 Program, which levied \$109,500,000 was approved by Referendum by the voters of Athens-Clarke County with 21% turnout and 74% “yes” votes. Collections began on April 1, 2018, and ended on September 30, 2022.
5. On May 24, 2022, the TSPLOST 2023 Program, which levied \$150,000,000 was approved by Referendum by the voters of Athens-Clarke County with 30% turnout and 67% “yes” votes.

Collections began on October 1, 2022. As of November 2025, \$104,800,000 has been collected.

6. On May 3, 2024, staff presented at a Mayor and Commission (M&C) Retreat that authorization to collect TSPLOST 2023 revenue was on track to meet the approved collection target in late 2026. With the receipt of TSPLOST 2023 collections through March 2024, it was determined that a referendum in May 2026 was necessary to avoid a gap in revenue.
7. On June 15, 2024, the M&C was provided with a work session style presentation regarding the proposed upcoming TSPLOST 2026 planning effort that included:
 - a. Updates on the TSPLOST 2023 collections and what is needed to prepare for TSPLOST 2026;
 - b. The draft proposed “charge” of the TSPLOST Advisory Committee (TSAC); and
 - c. The proposed Implementation Schedule.
8. On July 16, 2024, the M&C approved a commission-defined option (CDO) for the following:
 - a. Approve the TSPLOST 2026 Program Goals and Project Selection Criteria;
 - b. Approve an Implementation Schedule for the proposed TSPLOST 2026 Program with an amendment to include a task (Task 3) for solicitation of projects, outreach, education, and technical support; and modification of the deadline to provide appointments to the TSPLOST Advisory Committee to August 15;
 - c. Approve the “Charge” to the TSPLOST 2026 Advisory Committee; and
 - d. Directed staff to bring a proposal to the Mayor & Commission at a Work Session in time for a vote to consider by November 2024 a pre-designation of a certain percentage and/or dollar figure of the total TSPLOST 2026 program budget for capital projects the Mayor & Commission and staff have already identified as necessary major projects requiring funding from TSPLOST. Elements of the proposal shall include but are not limited to Pavement Maintenance, Public Transit funding, Stormwater Infrastructure, and the Residential Traffic Management Program.
9. On September 6, 2024, the TSPLOST 2026 project application form, for staff and the public, was published on the ACCGov website and the opportunity to apply was advertised to the public. The deadline for submission of projects for was January 15, 2025.
10. On October 8, 2024, at a M&C work session, staff presented a concept and options for pre-designating TSPLOST 2026 funds for eligible county-wide transportation activities.
11. On November 6, 2024, the M&C approved a CDO designating \$140,000,000 of potential TSPLOST 2026 revenues for countywide sustainment and other programs. This pre-designation was based on the concept of a five-year TSPLOST program. This designation included:

Item/Program	Designated Amount
Road Pavement Program	\$ 54,522,595
Live Stream Pipe Replacement	\$ 8,200,000
Bridge Repair and Maintenance	\$ 4,000,000
Residential Traffic Management Program	\$ 1,250,000
Transit Services	\$ 45,000,000
Bus Lifecycle Replacement	\$ 15,750,000
Mall Transfer Station	\$ 7,000,000
TSPLOST 2023 Sycamore Drive Adjustment	\$ 475,505
TSPLOST 2023 Westchester Adjustment	\$ 1,004,500
TSPLOST 2023 Stonehenge Adjustment	\$ 1,976,400
TSPLOST 2023 Smithonia/Smokey Rd Adjustment	\$ 821,000
TOTAL	\$140,000,000

12. By the deadline of January 10, 2025, 71 project applications were submitted. A total of 60 projects—with a combined value of over \$600M—remained after legal and technical review.
13. On January 21, 2025, the Mayor appointed 22 residents as recommended by Commissioners to the TSPLOST 2026 Advisory Committee (TSAC).
14. From February 3 until June 23, 2025, the TSAC held 17 meetings to review written and oral presentations of the projects prepared and submitted by project sponsors.
15. On March 4, 2025, the Mayor finalized the membership of the TSPLOST Advisory Committee. The final membership includes 16 members.
16. On July 15, 2025, TSAC Chair Alex Sams presented the list of “potential” projects valued at \$89,603,000 or 150% of the budget to the M&C at a special called work session.
17. On July 28, 2025, the TSAC developed a list of “candidate” projects valued at \$59,249,000; slightly less than the \$60,000,000 budget established by the Mayor and Commission.
18. On September 9, 2025, TSAC Chair Alex Sams presented the list of “candidate” projects to the M&C at a regular work session. These candidate projects include:

Project #	Project Name	Budget
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02	Downtown District Connectivity Improvements	\$1,201,000
13	Eastside Athens Complete Streets Redevelopment Project	\$10,998,000
15	Safe Routes Programs	\$4,773,000
17	Traffic Signal Infrastructure Improvements Program	\$3,809,000
19	Traffic Signage Replacement Program	\$2,241,000
20	Vision Zero Action Plan Implementation	\$6,054,000
23	College Station Bike Lanes Safety	\$3,732,000
29	Pedestrian Crossing Improvements at Vine St & Oak Ridge Ave	\$341,000
30	Pedestrian Crossing Improvements at Peter & Herring Street	\$341,000
31	Bus Shelters at Peter St & Gressom Ave	\$237,000
33	NA Neighborhood - Traffic Calming & Lighting at Leann Drive	\$155,000
34	Milledge Makeover	\$4,500,000
35	NA Neighborhood - Bus Stop Improvements	\$467,000
37	Barnett Shoals Crosswalk & Safety Project	\$4,668,000
46	Dirt Road Improvements Program	\$6,015,000
52	Intersection Improvements at Pittard Road/Hull Road	\$1,046,000
56	Areawide Bus Stop Improvements	\$566,000
57	NA - North Ave/Loop 10 Bridge Replacement Ph 1	\$7,264,000
67	Electrify the Fleet	\$841,000

Total Budget \$59,249,000

19. On September 20, 2025, staff presented an update at M&C Retreat, which included updated revenue projections, information regarding the TSPLOST 2023 collections period, considerations regarding a sixth year of collections for TSPLOST 2026, and a draft project list that combines predesignated projects and TSAC candidate projects.
20. On December 9, 2025, a joint meeting was held with the mayors and city councilmembers of both the City of Winterville and Town of Bogart, along with the Mayor and Commissioners of Athens-Clarke County. The purposes for the meeting were to discuss possible projects for inclusion in the TSPLOST referendum, the proposed rate of the sales tax, the proposed distribution of the sales tax, and a proposed Intergovernmental Agreement between all parties for the TSPLOST.

FACTS & ISSUES:

1. The M&C implemented an action to pre-designate a portion of the TSPLOST 2026 program for countywide sustainment and other programs. This pre-designation was based on the concept of a five-year TSPLOST program. The pre-designated countywide sustainment programs were supported with the following staff summaries:

\$54.5M was designated for the pavement management program. This budget provides

approximately \$10.9M annually of the \$17M annually needed to sustain the current average county-wide pavement condition index (PCI) of 68 and eliminate the backlog of roadways with “failing” scores. \$17M annually is enough to resurface 91 lane miles/yr and provide an additional 75 lane miles/yr of preventative maintenance on roadways. The pavement management program is also funded by General Fund contributions at varying levels annually and Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) through GDOT at approximately \$1.5M/yr.

\$8.2M was designated for live stream pipe replacement. This level of funding would replace all twelve (12) pipes with “failed” scores as of 2024. This estimate assumes that Stormwater Utility Enterprise Fund contributions continue at \$1M/yr to provide sustainable maintenance funding for stormwater infrastructure.

\$4M was designated for bridge repair and maintenance. This level of funding would support continuation of current maintenance efforts on ACCGov’s 41 bridges. A 2023 GDOT biennial bridge report results in an estimated \$1M of maintenance and repairs to superstructure bridges over the next 2 years. An additional \$1M in culvert bridge costs is estimated over the next 2 years. Bridge replacement is not included here.

\$1.25M was designated for the Residential Traffic Management Program. This level of funding would support continuation of past investments at \$250k/yr and serve 2-4 projects with enhancements. The Legacy NTMP list is estimated to cost \$650k total for the remaining legacy projects based on historical averages. The RTMP list is estimated to cost about \$80k per installation. The requested funding may support the top 4 to 7 projects on the RTMP.

\$45M was designated for Transit Services. This level of funding sustains existing Transit services only, serving 18 routes and 6.8M passenger miles annually. This level of funding does not support route enhancements or service expansions. The primary unknown factor is Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, which currently represents 40-50% of all funding for the Transit Department. Any portion of the budget that is not covered by FTA or TSPLOST would fall to the General Fund. This estimate assumes minimal FTA funding and no General Fund contributions.

\$15.75M was designated for Bus Lifecycle Replacement. This level of funding would support replacement of 2 buses per year without external funding. Bus replacement has been on hold since 2021. Transit operates a fleet of 32 buses with the oldest being 15 years. By 2027, 9 buses will have passed their FTA intended life.

2. The pre-designated list also includes \$7M for the Mall Transfer Station. Construction of this facility is currently unfunded. The Georgia Square Mall Redevelopment Project Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) Section 6.6 requires ACCGov to design and construct the Mall Transit Station to substantial completion within 5 years of the project developer’s completion of Phase 1B Horizontal Infrastructure. According to a report dated March 19, 2025, Horizontal Infrastructure is 0% complete.

- a. As an alternative to funding this facility through TSPLOST 2026, funding for this facility could be included in a future SPLOST or TSPLOST referendum.
- b. Another alternative could be to describe the project more generally for Transit Facilities. A general term allows flexibility and could fund a Mall Transfer Station when needed or, as appropriate, other transit facilities at any location.

3. The pre-designated list also includes \$4.28M to close funding gaps in existing TSPLOST 2023 projects on Sycamore Drive, in Westchester and Stonehenge neighborhoods, and on Smithonia & Smokey Roads in Winterville. Considering that collections on TSPLOST 2023 may continue until September 2027 and collect approximately \$28M more than anticipated, these projects could be fully funded via the current program.

4. Separate from and in addition to the pre-designated project list, a publicly open period of application was offered for anyone to submit project ideas. These applications were reviewed by the TSAC. At the time that the TSAC developed the potential project list, 60 projects remained eligible with a combined value of over \$600M. The candidate project list, as recommended by the TSAC, is made up of 19 projects valued at less than \$60M.

5. The following TSPLOST 2026 candidate projects have been programmed in active projects within the TSPLOST 2023 program.

- a. Project 52 Intersection Improvements at Pittard Road/Hull Road – This project is funded through TSPLOST 2023 Project 14.
- b. Project 31 Bus Shelters at Peter St & Gressom Ave – The locations identified here are funded through TSPLOST 2023 Project 10.

6. The following TSPLOST 2026 candidate projects are eligible for other funding sources including the TSPLOST 2023 program or Tax Allocation Districts (TADs) and could be incorporated into active projects.

- a. Project 29 Pedestrian Crossing Improvements at Vine St & Oak Ridge – this location is within Tax Allocation District #4 and could also be eligible for TSPLOST 2023 Project 13 East Athens Neighborhood Pedestrian Improvements.
- b. Project 30 Pedestrian Crossing Improvements at Peter & Herring Street – this location could be eligible for TSPLOST 2023 Project 13 East Athens Neighborhood Pedestrian Improvements.
- c. Project 33 NA Neighborhood Traffic Calming and Lighting at Leann Drive – this project & location could be eligible for TSPLOST 2023 Project 14 North Athens Transportation Improvements.
- d. Project 35 NA Neighborhood Bus Stop Improvements – this project & locations could be eligible for TSPLOST 2023 Project 14 North Athens Transportation Improvements or TSPLOST 2023 Project 19 ACCGov Public Transit Operations.
- e. Project 56 Areawide Bus Stop Improvements – this project & locations could be eligible for TSPLOST 2023 Project 19 ACCGov Public Transit Operations. One of the Fourth Street locations identified in the project is within Tax Allocation District #5.

Considering that collections for TSPLOST 2026 is expected to begin October 2027,

programming these projects into TSPLOST 2023 would make funding available sooner.

7. The budget for TSPLOST 2026 candidate project 57 NA - North Ave./Loop 10 Bridge Replacement Ph1 is \$7,264,000. TSPLOST 2023 Project 14 reserves an additional \$2M for improvement of this bridge. Coordination with GDOT on shared funding, design, and prioritization is ongoing.
8. A 2024 change to TSPLOST law permits the program to extend from five years to six years if the county and all qualifying municipalities enter into an intergovernmental agreement for that purpose. At the joint meeting with the cities of Bogart and Winterville, there was consensus that the program should be six years, with Winterville requesting that additional funding be provided for proposed Project 7: Intersection Improvements – Winterville Main St and Cherokee Rd. Projected revenue for the period of the levy assuming collections begin October 1, 2027 and continue for 6 years is \$239,000,000.

\$37,800,000	Year 1	Oct 27 to Sep 28
\$38,600,000	Year 2	Oct 28 to Sep 29
\$39,400,000	Year 3	Oct 29 to Sep 30
\$40,200,000	Year 4	Oct 30 to Sep 31
\$41,000,000	Year 5	Oct 31 to Sep 32
\$42,000,000	Year 6	Oct 32 to Sep 33

9. The TSPLOST 2026 Preliminary Projects List (**Attachment #1**) is a combination of the candidate projects list as recommended by the TSAC and the projects predesignated by M&C based on a 5-year budget.
10. Minimum distributions for Winterville & Bogart are determined by a formula prescribed in O.C.G.A. § 48-8-262(c), which was amended in 2024. The table below shows past distributions and the current minimum distribution for TSPLOST 2026 in a 6-year collection period. The increase in distributions to Winterville and Bogart is approximately \$3.9M and is due primarily to the consideration of road miles reported in each jurisdiction and the extension of the program by an additional year.

	TSPLOST 2018	TSPLOST 2023	TSPLOST 2026
Program duration	5 Years	5 Years	6 Years
Program value	\$ 109,500,000	\$ 150,000,000	\$ 239,000,000
Winterville	\$ 969,000	\$ 1,429,000	\$ 5,090,700 (2.13%)
Bogart	\$ 271,000	\$ 344,000	\$ 597,500 (0.25%)
ACCGov	\$ 108,260,000	\$ 148,227,000	\$ 233,311,800 (97.6%)

11. Neither the pre-designated list nor the Candidate Project list budgets revenue from a 6th year of collections. If the parties to the IGA would like to pursue a 6th year of collections, funding would need to be allocated. The following are a few fundamental considerations for

allocating the 6th year of collections.

- \$9M Continue the current annual pre-designation for Transit Services
- \$10.9M Continue the current annual pre-designation for the Pavement Management Program
- \$ 0.8M Continue the annual pre-designation for Bridge Repair and Maintenance
- \$9.8M Incorporation of Project 7: Intersection Improvements – Winterville Main St and Cherokee Rd as requested by the City of Winterville.
- Any remaining balance of a 6th year of collections is currently unassigned.

12. If the M&C plan on a six-year referendum, the incorporation of Project 7, and extending the pre-designations for transit services, pavement management, and bridge repair and maintenance, an additional \$3.5M can be added to the projects list without modifying any of the proposed projects.
13. However, if the M&C plan on a six-year referendum, the incorporation of Project 7, and DO NOT plan on extending the pre-designations for transit services, pavement management, and bridge repair and maintenance, an additional \$24.3M can be added to the projects list without modifying any of the proposed projects.
14. After the agenda setting meeting, staff will provide the M&C with a budgeting tool that advise on the outcomes of how changes to the pre-designations and projects list will impact the final program budget.
15. Staff encourages consideration of two projects to be selected for the Final Project List that were not selected by the TSAC in the candidate project list.
 - a. [Project 18 Intersection Improvement Program](#) – This program would support currently active intersection improvement projects that are approaching construction phase in the next 2-3 years. The original requested budget was \$16.4M, however, a budget as low as \$4M could be used to leverage external funding.
 - b. [Project 11 Airport Capital Improvement Plan](#) – Local Share from Grants: Recent airport projects have leveraged \$1.9M local dollars into almost \$20M external funds. These past investments were made possible by funding through SPLOST 2020 and TSPLOST 2018. Select future projects are estimated to leverage \$2.2M into \$12.3M external funds.
16. Consider combining select programs from the pre-designated and candidate project lists that

are sponsored by a single ACCGov Department into a single project in the Final Project List. As examples:

\$ 91,705,595	Transportation & Public Works	
	Pavement Management Program	\$ 54,522,595
	Live Stream Pipe Replacement	\$ 8,200,000
	Bridge Repair and Maintenance	\$ 4,000,000
	Residential Traffic Management Program	\$ 1,250,000
	Traffic Signal Improvement	\$ 3,809,000
	Traffic Signage Replacement	\$ 2,241,000
	Safe Routes	\$ 4,773,000
	Vision Zero	\$ 6,054,000
	Dirt road improvements (Original Surfacing)	\$ 6,015,000
	Electrify the Fleet	\$ 841,000

\$69,020,000	Transit	
	Services	\$ 45,000,000
	Mall transfer station	\$ 7,000,000
	Bus Stop improvements (candidate projects)	\$ 1,270,000
	Fleet	\$ 15,750,000

17. Operating Cost Impacts on the 19 projects in the candidate project list were estimated to be a total of \$695,500 annually. General fund operating costs will increase if the M&C add additional projects to the TSPLOST 2026 project list. Once construction is complete, operating costs must be funded outside of TSPLOST.
18. In accordance with Georgia law, the referendum for the TSPLOST 2026 Program will be held on May 19, 2026. The Board of Elections is required to issue the formal call for the TSPLOST 2026 Program Referendum no later than February 10, 2026. A resolution and associated IGAs must be formally adopted by the M&C no later than the regularly scheduled meeting on February 3, 2026, and will authorize a referendum on the imposition of the TSPLOST to begin the day after the end of collections for TSPLOST 2023 Program to meet the requirements of Georgia law and prevent a break in the TSPLOST collections. In order to complete the contents of the IGA and Resolution, the M&C should finalize the project list by January 6, 2026. The project list should receive legal and staff review before inclusion as an exhibit to the IGA.

OPTIONS:

1. Mayor and Commission:
 - a. Approve the TSPLOST 2026 Final Projects List for a Program in the amount of \$239,000,000 (**Attachment #1**); and,
 - b. Authorize the Mayor and staff to execute all related contracts and documents.

2. Mayor and Commission do not approve the TSPLOST 2026 Final Projects List and other actions related to the TSPLOST 2026 Program.
3. Mayor and Commission defined option.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED ACTION: Option 1 a & b

DEPARTMENT: Capital Projects

Prepared by: Josh Hawkins



Josh Hawkins, Capital Projects
Director

November 13, 2025

Date

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION: Option 1 a & b



Bob Cowell, Manager

December 10, 2025

Date

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1 – Preliminary Final Projects List for the TSPLOST 2026 Program

Preliminary Final Project List for the TSPLIST 2026 Program*Combination list of existing Candidate Projects and Pre-designated Programs*

Budget	Description	Source	Note
\$ 54,522,595	Pavement Management Program	pre-designated	see F&I #1
\$ 8,200,000	Live Stream Pipe Replacement	pre-designated	see F&I #1
\$ 4,000,000	Bridge Repair and Maintenance	pre-designated	see F&I #1
\$ 1,250,000	Residential Traffic Management Program	pre-designated	see F&I #1
\$ 6,015,000	Dirt Road Improvements (Original surfacing)	TSAC	
\$ 3,809,000	Traffic Signal Infrastructure Improvements	TSAC	
\$ 2,241,000	Traffic Signage Replacement	TSAC	
\$ 4,773,000	Safe Routes	TSAC	
\$ 6,054,000	Vision Zero Action Plan Implementation	TSAC	
\$ 841,000	Electrify the Fleet	TSAC	
\$ 45,000,000	Transit Services	pre-designated	see F&I #1
\$ 7,000,000	Mall Transfer Station	pre-designated	see F&I #2
\$ 237,000	Bus Shelters at Peter St & Gressom Ave	TSAC	see F&I #5
\$ 467,000	NA Neighborhood - Bus Stop Improvements	TSAC	see F&I #6.d
\$ 566,000	Areawide Bus Stop Improvements	TSAC	see F&I #6.e
\$ 15,750,000	Transit Fleet Replacement	pre-designated	see F&I #1
\$ 4,668,000	Barnett Shoals Crosswalk & Safety	TSAC	
\$ 3,732,000	College Station Bike Lanes Safety	TSAC	
\$ 1,201,000	Downtown District Connectivity	TSAC	
\$ 10,998,000	Eastside Athens Complete Streets	TSAC	
\$ 1,046,000	Intersection Improvement at Pittard Rd/Hull Rd	TSAC	see F&I #5
\$ 341,000	Pedestrian improvements at Vine St and Oak Ridge Ave	TSAC	see F&I #6.a
\$ 341,000	Pedestrian improvements at Peter & Herring Street	TSAC	see F&I #6.b
\$ 4,500,000	Milledge Makeover	TSAC	
\$ 7,264,000	NA - North Ave/Loop 10 Bridge Replacement Ph 1	TSAC	see F&I #7
\$ 155,000	Traffic Calming & Lighting on Leann Drive	TSAC	see F&I #6.c
\$ 475,505	TSPLIST 2023 Sycamore Drive supplemental funding	pre-designated	see F&I #3
\$ 1,004,500	TSPLIST 2023 Westchester supplemental funding	pre-designated	see F&I #3
\$ 1,976,400	TSPLIST 2023 Stonehenge supplemental funding	pre-designated	see F&I #3
\$ 821,000	TSPLIST 2023 Smithonia/Smokey Rd supplemental funding	pre-designated	see F&I #3
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\$ 199,249,000	Total value of ACCGov candidate and predesignated projects		

Note: The projected ACCGov distribution is \$192.3M. The project list above, valued at \$199.2M, would need to be further reduced by approximately \$7M in order to be within the projected 5-year distribution (**see F&I 9-12**).