

Submitted By: BikeAthens
Tyler Dewey
Phone: (815) 315-3864 Alt. Phone:
Email: executivedirector@bikeathens.com

Project Classification: Social Well-Being
Project Focus: Quality of Life
Project Type: Bicycle or Pedestrian Improvements (Includes Greenway and Rail to Trails)

Previously Submitted and Rejected:

Continuation Project: Yes - TSPLOST 2018 05-Oconee Rivers Greenway Project

Project Total Cost: \$ 9,465,000

Total Operating Cost: \$ 97,000

Project Description: The Tallassee Road Connector Shared Use Path (SUP) calls for construction of a 10 foot wide shared-use path on the southside of Tallassee Rd, to run from Mitchell Bridge Rd. to Three Oaks Dr.

The Tallassee Rd Connector continues two T-SPLOST projects and is part of multiple Athens-Clarke County Plans. First, the Tallassee Road Connector is a High Priority Trail as identified in the Greenway Network Plan. Second, the Tallassee Road Connector continues the path built as part of the T-SPLOST funded Tallassee Road Bridge Replacement Plan. As part of the bridge replacement, ACC will build a path on the south-side of Tallassee Rd from Weschester to a driveway across the street from the Pilgrim's Pride facility (see attachment). Athens in Motion identified the Tallassee Road Connector as a high priority transportation segment of the Greenway Network Plan and recommended using the next available SPLOST funds to build it. The path will connect neighborhoods, parks, and people. It will provide better community health, mobility, and safety. Shared-Use Paths and trails also have a positive economic impact on the community.

Project Mission Statement/Goals & Objectives: The MISSION of the Tallassee Road Connector Shared Use Path is to provide a safe place to walk and ride a bicycle along Tallassee Road. As the Greenway Network Plan says: "The Tallassee Road Connector is a planned street-based connection that will run the length of Tallassee Road from the intersection of Mitchell Bridge to Burney-Harris Lyons Middle School." Based on the recommendation of Athens in Motion, this project will extend the trail farther along Tallassee to connect to neighborhoods along Three Oaks Drive. Athens in Motion notes: " While all greenways in the 2016 Greenway Network Plan are valuable for both active transportation and recreation, a few have been highlighted as priority connections (Table 4-14) because they improve connectivity and fill missing gaps in the overall proposed network, both on- and off-street."

The Goal of the Tallassee Road Connector is to create a safe, connected place to walk or a ride a bike all the way from the Oglethorpe / Hawthorne Intersection to Three Oaks Dr. Oglethorpe Ave has bike

lanes and sidewalks and the lanes and sidewalk continue as Oglethorpe become Tallassee. The sidewalks and bike lanes end at the intersection of Tallassee and Mitchell Bridge Rd. The Tallassee Road Connector will continue that connection all the way out past Burney Harris Lyons Middle School.

Athens in Motion has five main goals, two are Connectivity and Equity. Connectivity aims to "design a connected network of low-stress bicycle and pedestrian facilities." Tallassee Road Connector helps meet that goal. This project shares the same OBJECTIVES as the Connectivity Goal of Athens in Motion: "Build connected facilities; Fill gaps in the sidewalk network; Improve active transportation connections to other forms of transportation, especially transit; Provide active transportation linkages to important destinations. The Tallassee Road Connector lengthens and connects to the Oglethorpe bike lanes and sidewalks. It makes it easier for folks to get to bus stops for Routes 5, 7, and 21, especially for folks east of Whitehead Rd who are not directly served by the bus. It links folks to Burney Harris Lyons and Tallassee Forest. The mission is safe streets, the goal is a connected biking and walking path. The objective is connected place to walk and ride that get people transit and other places they need to be. The best way to do that is a shared-use path. The Tallassee Road Connector.

Projected Useful Life of Project: Concrete Greenways / Shared-use paths have an estimate life-space of 20-30 years, but possibly up to 50. This project includes no bridges.

To meet the Project Goals & Objectives, when should this project be completed? It would be fantastic to time the construction to coincide with the construction of the Tallassee Rd bridge. This would create a seamless connection. However, it may not be possible to build the SUP that quickly. If not, sometime in the next 5 years.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building System compliance: While not a building per se, sidewalk and improved walkability align with LEED goals. Particularly, LEED aims to promote walkability: "To promote walking by providing safe, appealing, and comfortable street environments that support public health by reducing pedestrian injuries and encouraging daily physical activity."

How will this project help meet the Public Safety, Basic Facilities/Infrastructure, and/or Quality of Life needs in Athens-Clarke County? The Tallassee Road Connector Shared Use Path will provide a safe place to walk; since there are currently no sidewalks on this section of Tallassee. In this way, the project acts like a sidewalk and is Basic Infrastructure. As a shared use path, the Tallassee Road Connector also provides all the benefits of the Greenway. In this way, the project improves the Quality of Life in the community. Creating a safe, proceed place to walk and bike also makes Tallassee Road safer for people biking and walk. In this way, it improves public safety.

Tallassee Road Connector is identified as a high priority project in both Athens in Motion and the Greenway Network Plan. Treat it like a sidewalk for a moment: Sidewalks improve safety, improve mobility, and improve community health. According to the Federal Highway Administration, roads "without sidewalks are twice as likely to have pedestrian crashes as sites with sidewalks on both sides of the street." For people who cannot drive or do not have access to a car, sidewalk provide critical mobility options. Of course the

same is true for people who bike. Having a protected space ride dramatically increases safety and will encourage people to ride more. Both riding and walking have positive impacts on health.

How is this Project recommended/included in any approved ACCGOV Land Use Plan, Master Plan, Study, Service Delivery Plan, Envision Athens, etc.? Yes, it is a Priority trail in the Greenway Network Plan. It is a priority project in Athens in motion. It is included in Envision Athens by reference.

Triple Bottom Line Impacts

Positive Benefits for the Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: In addition to the benefits mentioned earlier in this application, trails have a positive impact on local economies. In a study of the Silver Comet Trail, the trail generated over \$30 million in direct recreational and tourism spending. It has a \$60 million economic impact annual. Trails, like the Tallassee Road Connector and the Greenway network, generate recreational and tourism spending. They also have been shown to increase property values and grow the tax base.

Across the county, trails have been found to generate \$4 in economic benefit for every dollar spent. If this held true for the Tallassee Road Connector, the shared-use path would generate over \$22 million. Even at a 2 to 1 return on investment, the Tallassee Road Connector would generate over \$10 million economic impact. As trails and shared-use paths increase the quality of life--they also help attract new business and employees. Recently Amazon chose new office spaces based in large part of the availability of transportation options. People like living and working in places that provide safe, comfortable places to recreate, exercise, and simply get around town. Tallassee Road Connector will make Athens a more attractive place to live.

Detrimental Impacts to the Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: Depending on the final alignment, Athens Clarke County may have to purchase some right of way (using SPLOST funds).

Positive Benefits for our Citizens and Visitors: First, people want safe places to walk, ride, and roll. In the Athens Wellbeing Project data, households in the Burney Harris Lyons district listed their 3 top desired amenities: 1) Walking Paths and Trails; 2) Improved Sidewalks; and 3) Bike Lanes, Paths, and Trails. Out of the 14 options, people chose these 3. The Tallassee Road Connector gives the community what they ask for. A shared-use path along Tallassee Road provides a safe walking path and trail. It acts like a sidewalk. It provides a safe place to bike. Effective government provides for citizens' needs. The Tallassee Road Connector meets citizen needs.

Providing more mobility options helps people who do not have access to, or the ability to, drive a car. Not every member of every household has access to car. Not everyone can drive, due to either age or disability. Providing a safe place to walk or drive makes it easier to walk or take the bus to get around town--to access

jobs, schools, or needed services. More mobility options can allow families to save money by reducing automotive trips.

A shared-use path will have a big impact on Athens livability. More safe places to walk and bike improve safety, health, and welfare. Having a safe place to walk and bike decreases the chances of crashes involving people walking along the road, or riding as traffic (as legally allowed). Increasing the safety of walking and biking will encourage walking and biking. That of course, can improve community health. The increased physical activity produced by increased walking and biking can help fight chronic disease. It helps build heart health. It fights obesity. Finally, trails improve the livability by making Athens a more attractive place for business and boost the economic profile of the county.

Detrimental Impacts for our Citizens and Visitors: If anything, the biggest potential negative impact is increased property values and the subsequent increase property tax that adjacent landowners may have to pay. This would only happen if the trail increase property values. Athens-Clarke County may have to purchase some Right of Way, which means some property owners may "lose" land. Of course, they would be compensated, so it would not be accurate to call it "losing."

Environmental Benefits, including but not limited to Positive impacts on existing Infrastructure/Systems: Creating a safe place to walk and bike will encourage people to walk and bike more. It may also encourage people to take a bike or walk instead of driving. Shifting modes from a personal automobile to walking and biking has a positive environmental impact by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and improving air quality.

Detrimental Impacts for the Environment, including but not limited to Negative impacts on existing Infrastructure/Systems: There would be land disturbances during construction, and the final trail would have a lot on non-permeable surface. However, the environmental benefits of more walking and biking would counter-act any detrimental impact.

Positive/Negative Impacts on ACCGOV Departments, Agencies, or other Organizations, if not covered in one of the above questions: Construction of the Tallassee Road Connector would have a biggest impact on Leisure Services, as they are in charge of continued maintenance of greenway. However, this section, as a linear shared-use path, would be easier to keep well-maintained than off street trails. Providing a safe place to walk and ride would help the traffic operation of Tallassee Road.

Project Costs

Detailed project capital budget costs (to be funded from SPLOST 2020 only):

Project Costs (round to thousand)	Amount
1. Land Acquisition / ROW / Easement:	\$ 800,000
2. Design Fees: (Min.12% of New Const.; 14% of reno,; 16% for LEED proj.)	\$ 665,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: (Min. Minimum of 3% of Construction Costs – used for permitting, etc. Utilize minimum of 10% if land acquisition if necessary.)	\$ 167,000
4. Fixtures, Furniture, and Equipment (for a facility): A detailed estimate is preferred – but dependent upon the specific project, utilize at a minimum \$15 to \$20 per square foot.	\$ -
5. Construction:	\$ 5,541,000
6. Construction Contingency: (10% of the Construction line item)	\$ 555,000
7. Acquisition of Capital Equipment:	\$ 35,000
8. Testing:	\$ 167,000
9. Project Management: (4% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 284,000
10. Project Contingency: (10% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 738,000
11. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	\$ 56,000
12. Other 1: Tree Replanting	\$ 60,000
13. Other 2:	\$ -
Project Subtotal:	\$ 9,189,000
14. Program Management (3% of Project Subtotal):	\$ 276,000
SPLOST 2020 Project Total:	\$ 9,465,000

Operating Cost

Total Annual Net Operating Costs when Project is complete:

Only identify additional or net operating costs to be paid by ACCGOV. Identify the additional or net costs needed above ACCGOV's current operating budget to operate the requested project and 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	78,000
2. Annual Utilities:	
• Gas:	-
• Electrical:	-
• Water:	-
• Sewer:	-
• Phone:	-
• Solid Waste Collection:	2,000
• Other:	-
3. Operating Supplies:	2,000
4. Equipment Maintenance:	4,000
5. Facility Maintenance:	2,000
6. Fuel:	6,000
7. Other: Hazard Tree Removal	3,000
8. Other:	-
9. Other:	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	97,000
NET OPERATING COSTS OF PROJECT:	\$ 97,000

Project Financing

Is the proposed Project to receive funding from source(s) other than SPLOST 2020? No

New Staffing

Position	Title	Hourly Rate	# of Hours /wk	# of Positions	Total Annual Expense
	Maintenance Worker II	27.17	40	1	56,514
	PTNB Park Assistant	13.99	29	1	21,097

Project Site

Will the proposed Project require any land, whether existing sites, new site, easements, or Rights of Way? Yes

Will the proposed Project be on a site currently owned by ACCGOV? N/A

Approximately how many acres is available or will be needed for the new facility or Park? N/A

Project Location/Address (Existing or Proposed): Linear project address will vary

Will the Project require fee simple additional land acquisition? In some cases it might but mostly R/W and easements

Will the Project require Rights-of-Way or Easement acquisition? Yes but amount is unknown

Table 4-14: Greenway Projects

ID	NAME	LOW COST	HIGH COST	FROM	TO	LENGTH (MI)
13	Normaltown Connector Greenway	\$410,643	\$410,643	Old Jefferson Rd/Greenway	Oneta St	0.3
14	Buena Vista Ave/ Nantahala Ext	\$396,276	\$396,276	Old Jefferson Rd/Greenway	Boulevard	0.3
16	Wilkerson Greenway	\$599,592	\$599,592	E. Broad St	Williams St Greenway	0.5
22	Brookyn Middle Creek Greenway	\$944,491	\$944,491	Baxter St	Normal Ave/Belvoir Hts	0.8
24	Brookyn Middle Creek Greenway	\$977,469	\$977,469	Alps Rd/West Lake Rd	Baxter St	0.8
31	Tallasee Rd	\$2,363,972	\$2,363,972	Tukey Creek Rd	Mitchell Bridge Rd	1.9
32	Tallasee Rd Greenway S.	\$3,176,573	\$3,176,573	Three Oaks Dr	Turkey Creek Rd	2.6
115	Middle Oconee Greenway	\$1,984,323	\$1,984,323	Mitchell Bridge Rd	W. Broad St/Atlanta Highway	1.6
116	Brookyn Creek S.	\$1,239,255	\$1,239,255	St James St/Devonshire/Somerset	Alps Rd/West Lake Rd	1.0
TOTAL		\$12,092,594	\$12,092,594			2.9

Table 9: Priority Trails

Trail Name	Priority	Corridor	Distance	Current Estimated Cost	Number of Bridges
Cook's Trail	Tier 1	North Oconee River	.416 miles	> \$8 million	Multiple
Oak/Oconee Bridge Underpass	Tier 1	North Oconee River	.15 miles	\$1 million	1
Riverside Trail – MLK Parkway	Tier 1	North Oconee River	.66 miles	\$4 million	2
Riverside Trail – North Oconee River Park	Tier 1	North Oconee River	.58 miles	\$4 million	2
Tallassee Road Connector	Tier 1	Middle Oconee River	3.31 miles	\$5 million	0
Pulaski Creek Connector – South	Tier 2	North Oconee River	.21 miles	\$1 million	Boardwalk
Pulaski Creek Connector – North	Tier 2	North Oconee River	.41 miles	\$2.5 million	1
Nature Center Loop – West	Tier 2	North Oconee River	2.93 miles	> \$7 million	Multiple
Nature Center Loop – East	Tier 2	North Oconee River	1.8 miles	> \$7 million	Multiple
Ben Burton to Beech Haven	Tier 3	Middle Oconee River	1.37 miles	\$6 million	2
Firefly Connector at 78/10 Interchange	Tier 3	Firefly Trail	.17 miles	\$3 million	1
Normaltown Connector – Ben Burton to Bishop	Tier 3	Normaltown Connector	2.23 miles	\$2 million	0
Normaltown Connector – Bishop to Boulevard	Tier 3	Normaltown Connector	2.05 miles	\$2 million	0
Normaltown Connector – Boulevard to North Oconee River Greenway	Tier 3	Normaltown Connector	1.95 miles	\$6 million	2

A description and map of each proposed trail listed in the table above follows.

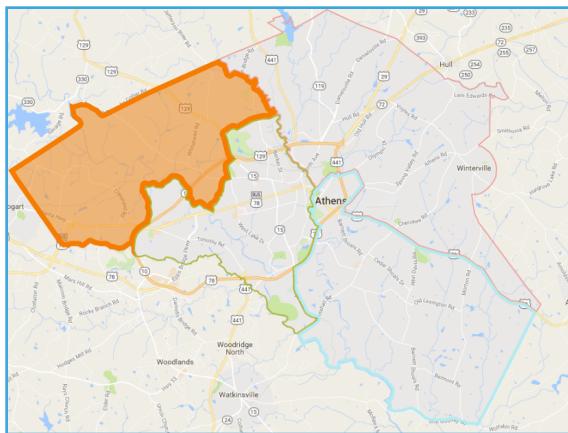


BURNEY-HARRIS-LYONS MIDDLE



OVERVIEW

BHL encompasses the Northwest portion of the county, extending down to the Loop 10, the Middle Oconee River, Hawthorne Ave and Kathwood Dr. The North Oconee River makes the east border of the zone.



PLEASE NOTE:

The following symbols are used to designate when measures in this report are higher or lower than the county average:

+ higher than county

~ lower than county

Lack of a symbol means the measure is about the same as the county.

SCHOOLS:

- BHL Middle School
- Cleveland Road Elementary
- Oglethorpe Elementary
- Whitehead Road Elementary

NEIGHBORHOODS:

- Forest Heights
- Hampton Park
- Tallassee Road
- Westchester
- Homewood Hills
- Quail Wood
- Fowler Mill & Cavalier Rd
- Huntington Park
- Stonehenge
- Garnett Ridge (Choice Zone)

- Vincent Dr (Choice Zone)

POINTS OF INTEREST:

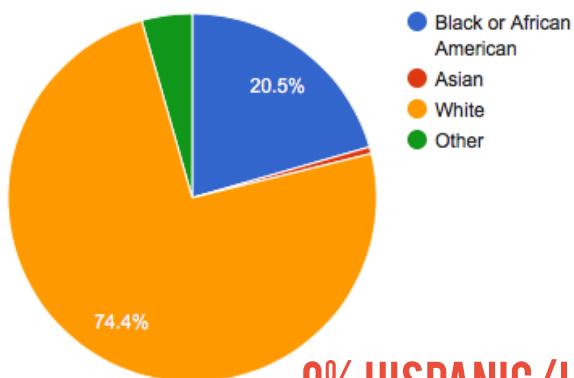
- Ben Burton Park
- Athens YMCA
- Holland Youth Sports Complex (Choice Zone)
- Athena Square
- Homewood Shopping Center
- Georgia Square Mall
- Westgate Park and Pool
- Advantage Behavioral
- Hogan Lumber
- Pilgrim's Pride
- Caterpillar Manufacturing
- Sam's Club
- Food Bank of NE GA (Choice)
- Hope Haven (Choice Zone)

Other Demographics

- **8%** are currently enrolled in college~
- Average age of respondent was **51** years+
- **17%** of households had veteran status+
- **91%** have Internet access at home+
- **28%** have moved in the last year~
- **77%** have a child in CCSD+

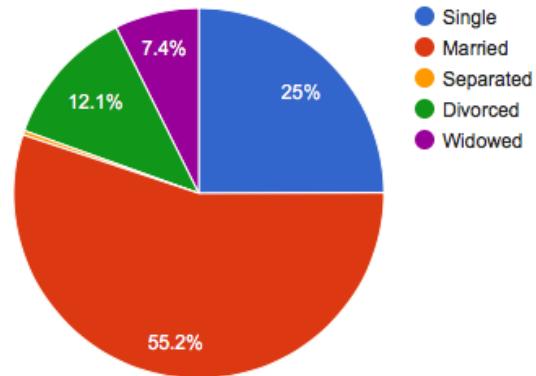
DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE BREAKDOWN

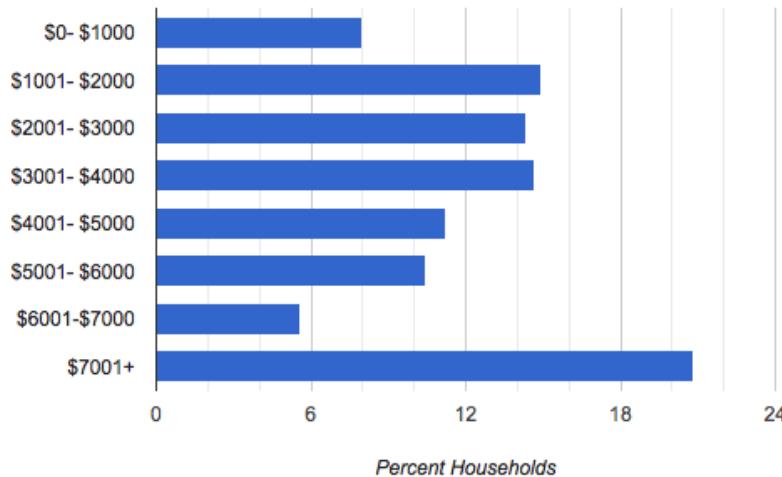


9% HISPANIC/LATINO ETHNICITY

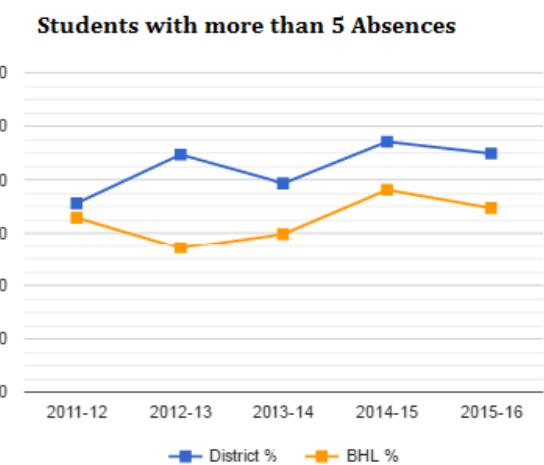
MARITAL STATUS



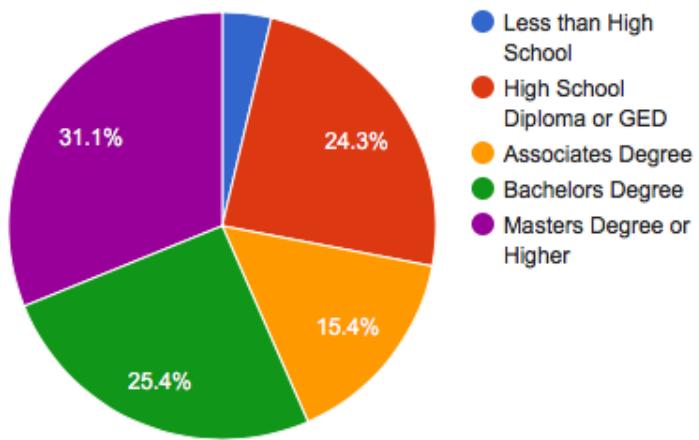
MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME



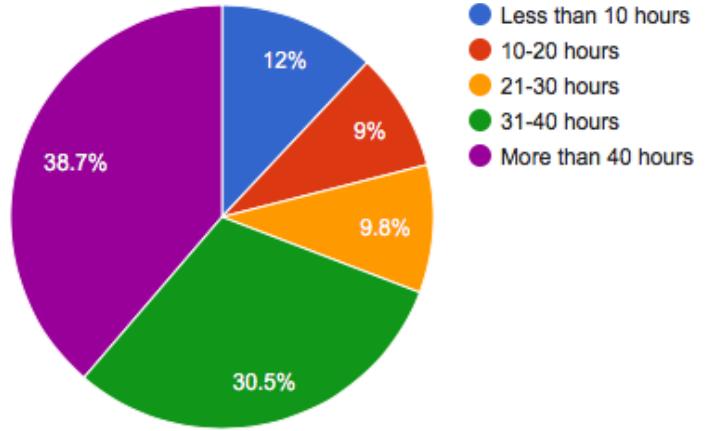
STUDENT ATTENDANCE



EDUCATION LEVEL



HOURS WORKED IN A WEEK



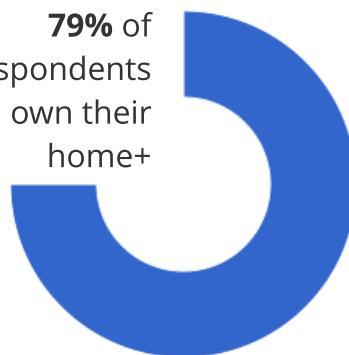
TOP 5 DESIRED AMENITIES

1. WALKING PATHS AND TRAILS
2. IMPROVED SIDEWALKS
3. BIKE PATHS AND TRAILS
4. PARKS AND PLAY GROUNDS
5. COMMUNITY GARDENS

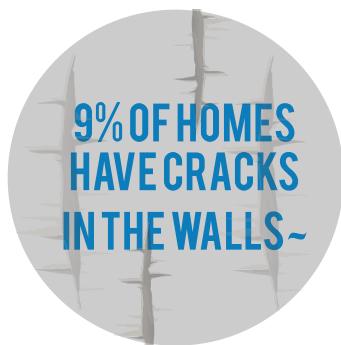


HOUSING

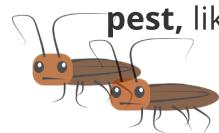
79% of respondents own their home+



7% OF HOMES REPORT MOLD~



About 14% of all households reported having some kind of pest, like rats or roaches~



LIFELONG LEARNING

81% BELIEVE
EDUCATION
PREPARES CHILD
FOR SUCCESS

79% AGREE
SCHOOLS ARE
CLEAN

57% AGREE
SCHOOLS "DO
GOOD" IN
NEIGHBORHOODS

35% WANT TO
BE MORE
INVOLVED IN
SCHOOLS

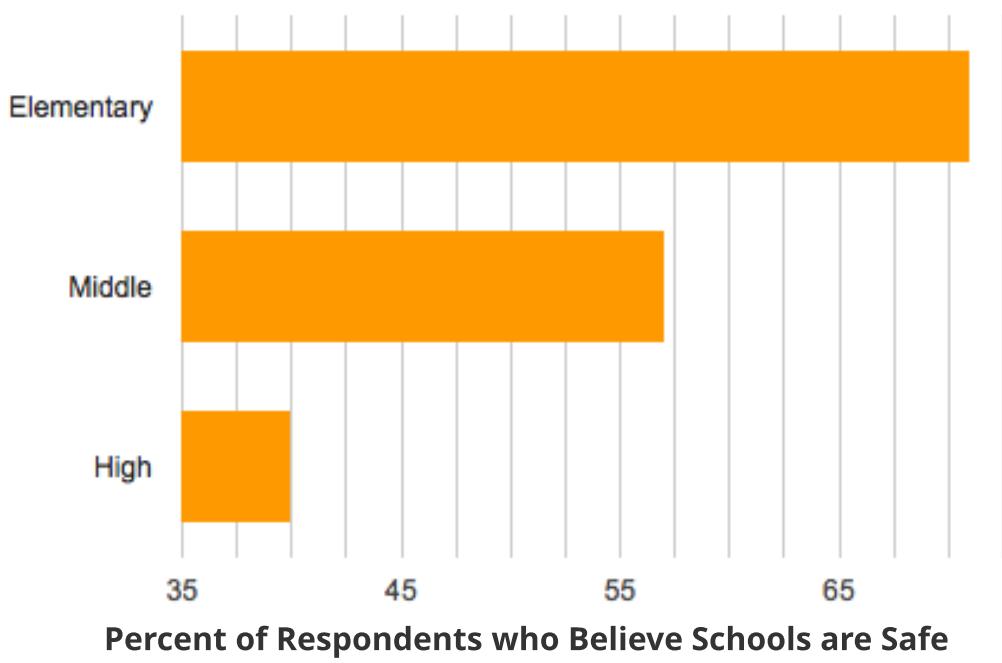
58% FEEL
SCHOOLS ARE
WELCOMING

School Pride
58% of households have
pride in their local schools
38% of households feel
connected to their local
schools

Childcare
41% of households use some form
of childcare +
34% use daycares+
24% stay with family
friends
37% stay with
grandparents
43% stay in an
after school program+

There is a lower than
average perception of
childcare affordability,
flexibility, and safety within
the school zone

PERCEIVED SAFETY IN SCHOOLS



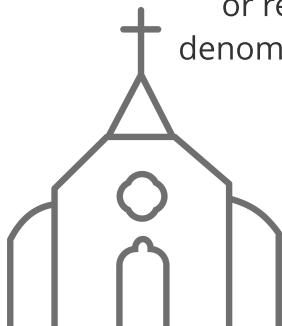
CIVIC VITALITY

85% SAY THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH LIFE THESE DAYS

73% SAY THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOB~

88% SAY THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH HOME LIFE

65% of households belong to some church or religious denomination

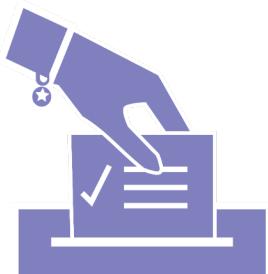


Political Engagement

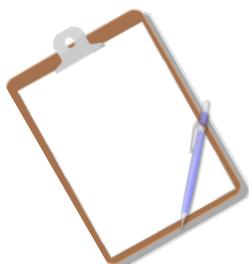
80% of households know where to vote

89% are registered to vote

70% voted within the last 12 months



37% signed a petition in the last 12 months



28% corresponded with an official

39% attended a public meeting in the last 12 months

73% SAY THEY PAY ATTENTION TO GOVERNMENT OVERALL

44% believe they can influence decisions affecting Athens~

57% HAVE VOLUNTEERED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

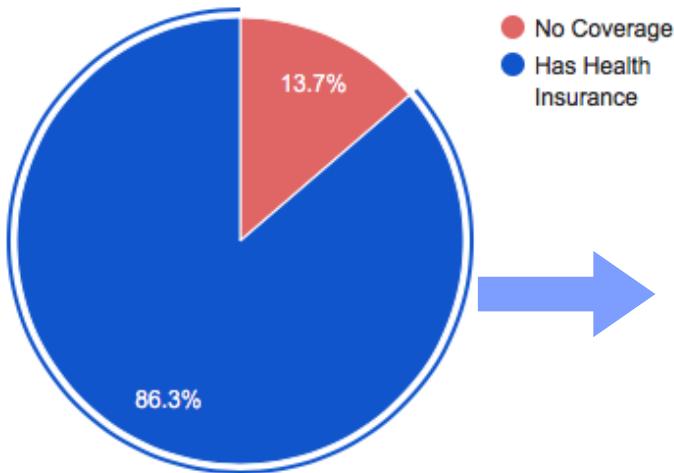
56% GATHER SOCIALLY AT LEAST WEEKLY~



82% HAVE DONATED MONEY TO CHARITY

HEALTH

INSURANCE COVERAGE



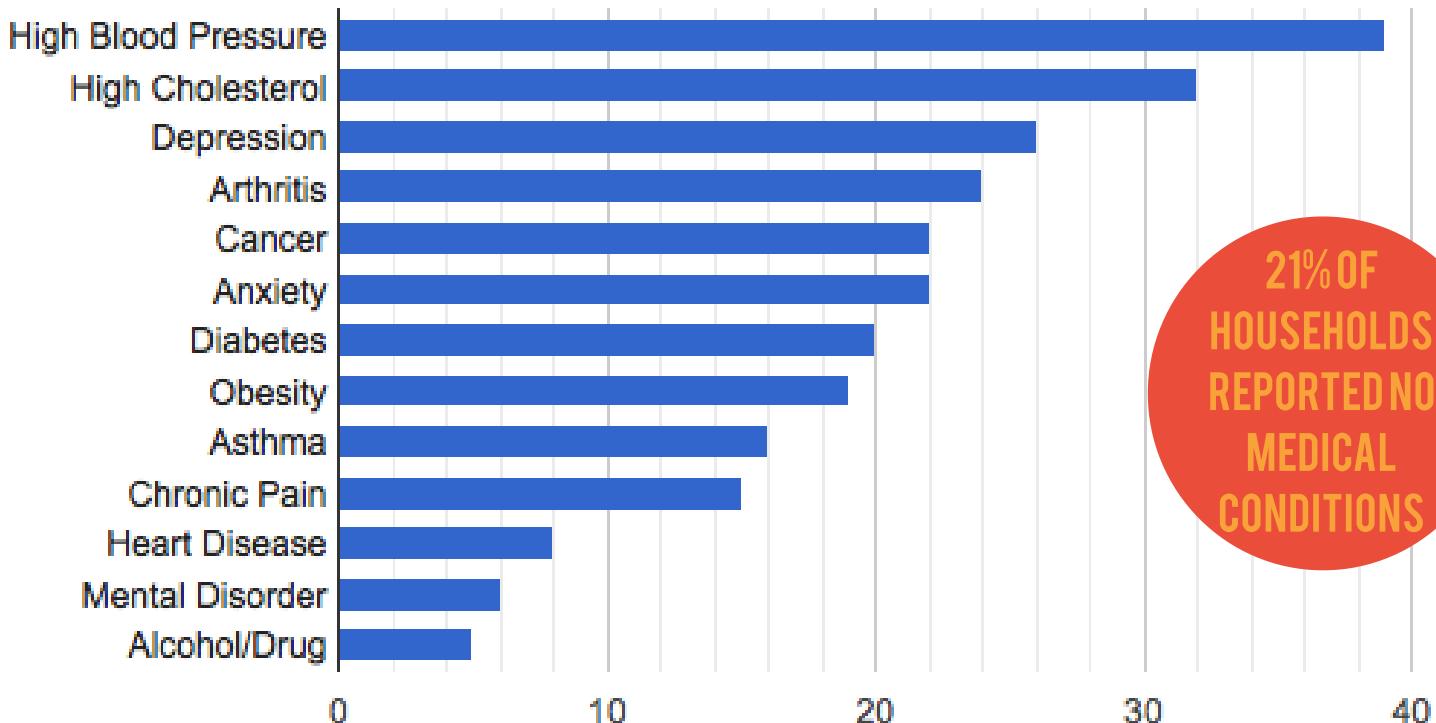
Of those with health insurance coverage, **17% were denied at a medical practice** in the last 12 months



On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being the worst, when ask about their general health, the average rating for households was 2.4

On average, households in your school zone eat fast food 1.2 days out of the week

HEALTH CONDITIONS REPORTED BY HOUSEHOLD



21% OF HOUSEHOLDS REPORTED NO MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Percent Households Reporting Conditions

COMMUNITY SAFETY

99% SAY THEY FEEL SAFE IN THEIR HOME

96% SAY THEY FEEL SAFE ON THEIR STREET

90% SAY THEY FEEL SAFE IN LOCAL PARKS

82% SAY THEY FEEL SAFE IN DOWNTOWN ATHENS

Neighborhood Relations

72% trust their neighbor~

79% think people in their neighborhood get along~

74% talked with neighbors in the last month for more than 10 minutes~

78% feel comfortable with their children playing+

84% feel safe to walk or exercise in their neighborhood



TOP 5 PERCEIVED NEIGHBORHOOD PROBLEMS



Attendance data from The Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2010-2016, and can be accessed here: <https://gosa.georgia.gov/downloadable-data>. All other data from the Athens Wellbeing Project (AWP) Fall 2016 Household Survey. County and neighborhood-level AWP profiles, as well as additional data resources, can be accessed here: <http://www.athenswellbeingproject.org/data/>.

Questions or comments? Please email James Parlament at parlamentj@clarke.k12.ga.us.

TRAIL USAGE EVALUATION

To understand the scale of economic impact generated by the Silver Comet Trail, it is important to first know trail users and their activity patterns. The trail usage evaluation count and survey explored four key questions:

1. **How many** people use the trail and where are they using it most frequently?
2. **Who** is using the trail?
3. **When and how often** are people using the trail?
4. **Do people spend money** in the communities along the trail and if they do, what do they spend their money on?

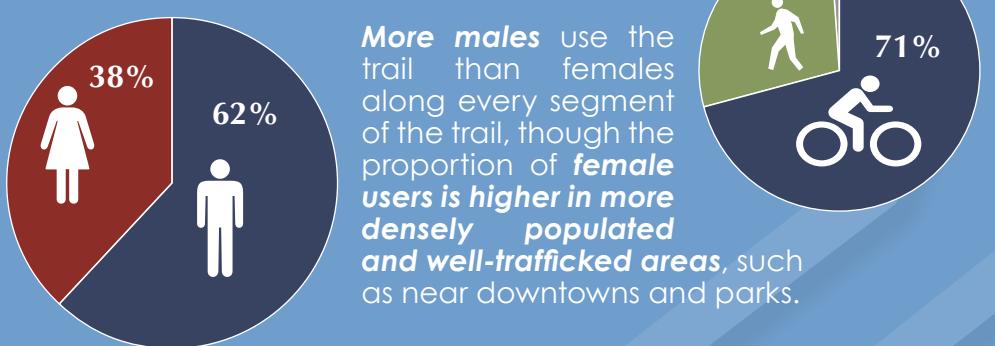
KEY FINDINGS*

The Silver Comet Trail has an estimated **1.9 million users** each year.

Estimated Usage of the Current Silver Comet Trail, by Major Trailhead

Smyrna Trail Head	Silver Comet Cycles Trail Head	Powder Springs	Hiram Trail Head	Dallas Trail Head	Rambo Trail Head	Rockmart Trail Head	Cedartown Trail Head	GA/AL State Line
434,000	350,000	277,000	270,000	203,000	192,000	90,000	25,000	47,000
Total Users								
1,888,000								

The **majority of trail users are bicyclists**, particularly in more remote and rural areas.



Smyrna Trail Head had the highest estimated annual trail volume.

97% of people use the trail either for **recreation or exercise**, though many people do use the trail for commuting or to access nearby destinations, especially in urban areas.

People visiting the trail traveled from **23 counties** and **8 states**, including Washington State, to use the trail (during the two-week survey period).

When users spend money while using the trail, the majority of them spend money on food and may spend up to \$50 per visit.**

*Information was collected via counts and surveys at nine locations using methodology from the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (NBPDP)

**Field survey participants were asked 'If you do anticipate spending money, what do you estimate your party's overall spending to be during this trip?' This number is conservative and likely to be more than \$50 per user for non-resident users.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

This Economic Impact Analysis is the first of its kind to comprehensively report the economic benefits of the existing 61-mile Silver Comet Trail and its proposed 66-mile expansion. Recreational amenities such as rail-trails are increasingly seen as regional economic development tools that generate value through:

- **Recreational spending** (bicyclerentals, food & drink, sporting equipment)
- **Tourism** (spending by out-of-state users on lodging, transportation, dining)
- **Spillover impacts** (additional jobs and worker spending)
- **Fiscal impacts** (sales tax revenue generated)
- **Increased property values** (increased household wealth near SCT)
- **Property tax revenue** (benefitting municipalities and school districts)

Summary of Economic Impacts for Existing and Expanded Silver Comet Trail

	Current Trail Network	Expanded Trail Network
Recreational Spending	\$47 Million	\$71 Million
Tourism Spending	\$10 Million	\$15 Million
Regional Spillover	\$98 Million	\$147 Million
State Spillover Impact	\$118 Million	\$177 Million
Statewide Fiscal Impact	\$4 Million	\$5 Million
Property Value Increases	\$182 Million	\$316 Million
Property Tax Gains	\$2 Million	\$4 Million
TOTAL	\$461 Million	\$735 Million

Source: Econsult Solutions, Inc. (2013)

BENEFIT/COST ANALYSIS

Benefit Valuation of the Silver Comet Trail Expansion: Based on the estimates of the Economic Impact Analysis, **the 66-mile trail expansion is conservatively expected to generate a combined economic benefit of \$274 million**. This includes local, regional, and statewide benefits:

LOCAL	\$24 million more in recreational spending and \$5 million more in tourism spending per year
	\$130 million more in property value impact and \$1.7 million in annual property tax revenues to municipalities and school districts
REGIONAL	\$50 million more in economic impact each year
	400 more jobs
STATEWIDE	\$60 million more in economic impact each year
	670 more jobs

The economic benefits of the Silver Comet Trail expansion will be even greater if this investment catalyzes new development within Northwest Georgia, which would create additional property tax gains and spillover impacts.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The combined **cost to construct all recommended trail connections within Georgia is estimated to total \$59 million**. An estimate of the return on investment of the Silver Comet Trail expansion can be provided using the results of the existing and proposed economic impact analyses. **For every \$1 spent on the Silver Comet Trail expansion, Georgians gain an estimated \$4.64 in direct and indirect economic benefits**. This translates to an over 400% return on investment for local communities, the region, and the state.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2012, the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) initiated the Silver Comet Economic Impact Analysis and Planning Study to determine the existing and future economic impacts of the Silver Comet Trail (SCT). The SCT is the nation's longest and oldest paved rail-trail, extending 61.5 miles and connecting seven cities and three counties from Smyrna to the Georgia/Alabama state line. NWGRC is exploring a 66-mile expansion within Georgia as well as coordinating with Alabama and Tennessee on long-term interstate connections. This in-state expansion alone has the potential to double the number of users and economic benefits on a local and regional scale.



HISTORY OF THE SILVER COMET TRAIL

In 1992, The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) purchased the inactive rail line through Cobb, Paulding, and Polk counties from CSX. GDOT intended to use the line as a high-speed transit route. Instead the corridor became a shared use, non-motorized trail in 1998. Construction of the trail was initiated through a collaborative effort among GDOT, Georgia State Parks, PATH Foundation, Cobb County DOT, Paulding County, and Polk County.

QUALITATIVE BENEFITS OF TRAILS

In addition to the spending generated by the Silver Comet Trail, and the value conferred to residential locations that are near it, the Silver Comet Trail produces a number of other positive economic benefits to residents, businesses, and the State. These benefits tend to be qualitative in nature but are important to include in an overall discussion of benefits and costs.



EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE ATTRACTION
Quality of life decisions, including the availability of recreational amenities like trails, are becoming ever more important factors in where people choose to live and work.¹ The Silver Comet Trail is a valuable asset that boosts the relative attractiveness of the region compared to competing regions and plays an important role in Northwest Georgia's ability to draw and retain talented workers and employers.

INCREASED ACCESS AND MOBILITY

By encouraging and facilitating non-automobile trips, the Silver Comet Trail improves access and mobility. Being able to choose between multiple modes of travel leads to gains for users, as they have more options for their business and leisure travel. It also takes cars off the road, which has at least three positive benefits:

- Reduces air pollution and improves air quality²
- Reduces congestion for drivers, saving time and energy consumption
- Reduces wear and tear on roads and vehicles



DIRECT USE BENEFITS

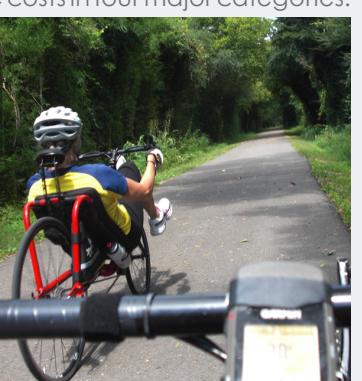
Silver Comet Trail users do not pay directly for their use, but do generate value for themselves. This value is known as a direct use benefit, or "willingness to pay". This ranges from a couple of dollars for leisure walking to significantly more for more intensive activities like trail biking. At a time in which people are seeking no-cost and low-cost leisure options, the value associated with free use of an outdoor amenity is quite high, so the Silver Comet Trail represents a meaningful resource for the State and its residents.

HEALTH BENEFITS

As health care costs soar, recreational amenities such as the SCT are seen by governments, health professionals, and citizens as an important way to encourage active lifestyles and minimize negative health outcomes.

Physical activity has been shown to lower health care costs in four major categories:

- Direct health care costs: Costs paid for immediate health care needs
- Indirect health care costs: Costs paid for long-term avoidance of chronic negative health outcomes
- Direct and indirect worker compensation costs: Costs paid in worker compensation claims
- Absenteeism and "presenteeism" costs: Costs paid in loss of workplace productivity from sickness or impaired ability to perform



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Green space corridors help link fragmented tracts of land to provide larger habitats for wildlife while also protecting sensitive natural features, natural processes, and ecological integrity. These tracts of open space also contribute to cleaner air by preserving stands of plants that create oxygen and filter air pollutants. Vegetation within the green space corridors also creates a buffer to protect streams, rivers, and lakes, preventing soil erosion and filtering pollution caused by agricultural and roadway runoff.³



The Silver Comet Trail is a multi-jurisdictional project traversing three counties and multiple municipalities. Future connections will increase these numbers. One centralized authority is needed to plan, develop, and maintain facilities, as well as interface with the general public. For successful implementation and operations, the Silver Comet Trail's expansion will require regional management. The careful creation of a Regional Management Agency would include a cooperative effort with the NWGRC and ARC and existing municipalities responsible for maintaining the trail network.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

David Kenemer, Principal Planner
Northwest Georgia Regional
Commission
P.O. Box 1798
Rome, GA 30162-1798
(706) 295-6485 | dkenemer@nwgrc.org

Byron Rushing
Atlanta Regional Commission
40 Courtland St NE
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 463-3345 | brushing@atlantaregional.com

PROJECT CONSULTANT TEAM

alta GREENWAYS
In association with Econsult Solutions, Inc.
Robert and Company

1. "Quality of Life in the Planning Literature," Dissart and Deller (2000) and "Amenities as an Economic Development Tool: is there Enough Evidence?" Gottlieb (1994).
2. Federal Highway Administration. (1992). Benefits of bicycling and walking to health. Gotchi, T. & Mills, K. (2008). Active transportation for America. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.
3. Arendt, R. (1994). Rural by Design. American Planning Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Table 4-14: Greenway Projects

ID	NAME	LOW COST	HIGH COST	FROM	TO	LENGTH (MI)
13	Normaltown Connector Greenway	\$410,643	\$410,643	Old Jefferson Rd/Greenway	Oneta St	0.3
14	Buena Vista Ave/ Nantahala Ext	\$396,276	\$396,276	Old Jefferson Rd/Greenway	Boulevard	0.3
16	Wilkerson Greenway	\$599,592	\$599,592	E. Broad St	Williams St Greenway	0.5
22	Brookyn Middle Creek Greenway	\$944,491	\$944,491	Baxter St	Normal Ave/Belvoir Hts	0.8
24	Brookyn Middle Creek Greenway	\$977,469	\$977,469	Alps Rd/West Lake Rd	Baxter St	0.8
31	Tallasee Rd	\$2,363,972	\$2,363,972	Tukey Creek Rd	Mitchell Bridge Rd	1.9
32	Tallasee Rd Greenway S.	\$3,176,573	\$3,176,573	Three Oaks Dr	Turkey Creek Rd	2.6
115	Middle Oconee Greenway	\$1,984,323	\$1,984,323	Mitchell Bridge Rd	W. Broad St/Atlanta Highway	1.6
116	Brookyn Creek S.	\$1,239,255	\$1,239,255	St James St/Devonshire/Somerset	Alps Rd/West Lake Rd	1.0
TOTAL		\$12,092,594	\$12,092,594			2.9

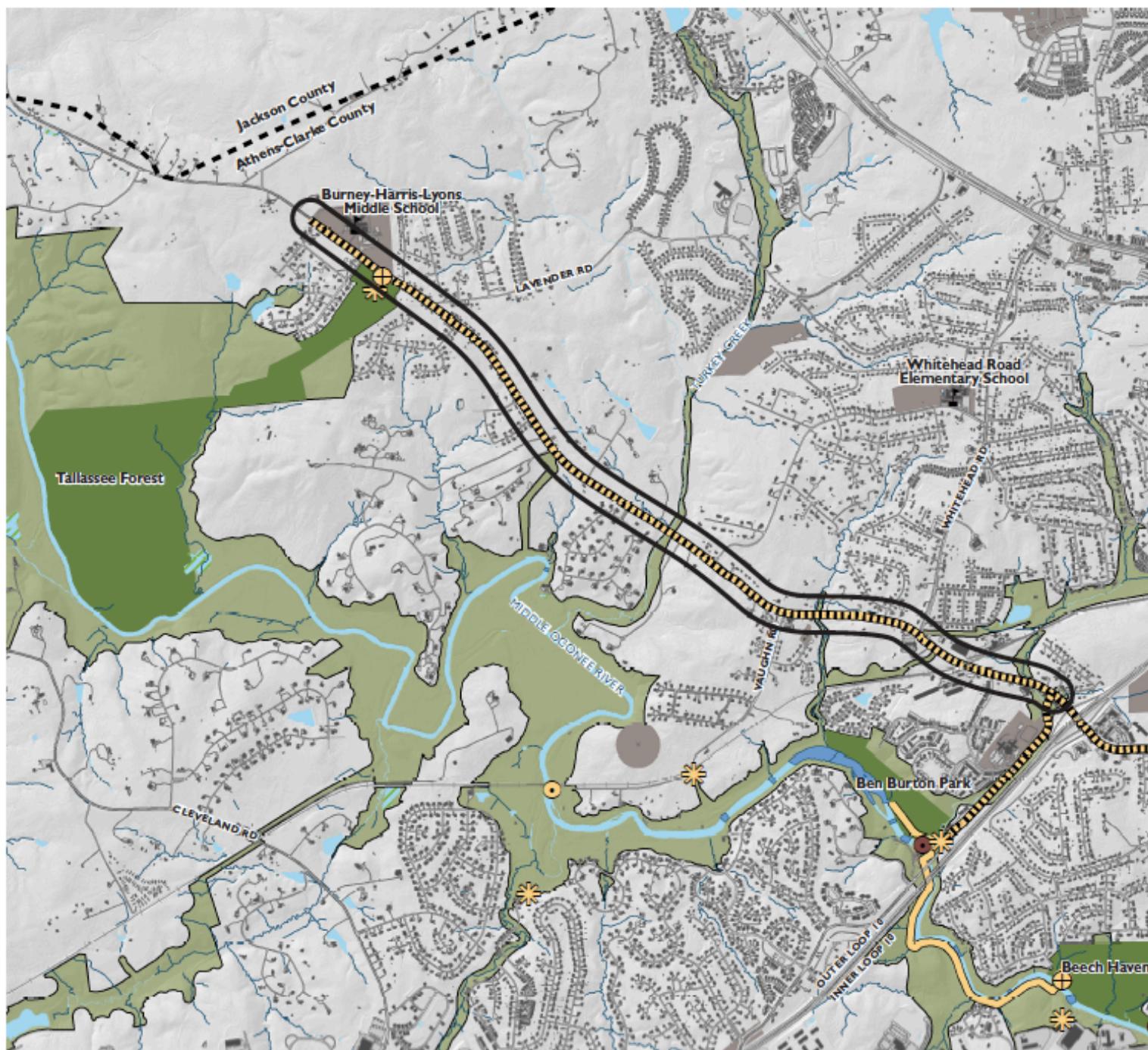
Tallassee Road Connector

4.5 miles X 10 feet wide	23760	\$234 a foot estimated for a 12" wide path.	
ROW Easement	0	Unknown	
Design Fees	664,865.40	based on SPLOST Formula	
Misc. Fees	166,216.35	based on SPLOST Formula	
FFE	NA		
Construction	5,540,545	Based on Athens in Motion estimates	
Capitol equipment	0	based on SPLOST Formula	
Testing	166,216.35	based on SPLOST Formula	
Other 1	0		
Other 2	0		
All other categories automatically calculated			

Shared Use Path 12' wide - Concrete (No Curb and Gutter)

Includes: removal of existing earth, minimal grading to avoid property acquisition. Four foot buffer if necessary. Prices based on 100' long section on one side of roadway.

Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Earthwork, Fill, Excavation, Grading	CY	10	\$19.00	\$190
Aggregate Base Course	CY	5	\$18.19	\$91
Concrete Surface Paving	SY	138	\$93.56	\$12,911
New Signs (assume 1 per 500')	EA	0	\$246.00	\$49
Lump Sum Items				
Mobilization	LS	1.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500
Landscaping	LS	1.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000
Drainage and E&S	LS	1.00	\$500.00	\$500
Maintenance of Traffic	LS	1.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000
Misc. Move mailbox/ signage	LS	1.00	\$250.00	\$250
Utility Adjustments	LS	1.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000
				20% Contingency \$3,898
				Total Estimated Cost \$23,400
				\$234.00 Per Foot



TALLASSEE ROAD CONNECTOR

Greenway Network Plan

Athens, Georgia
December 2016

Figure 4.11: Tallassee Road Connector

Prepared by
ACC Leisure Services
Office of Park Planning



for Athens-
Clarke County
Leisure Services