

TSPLOST 2023:

Hawthorne Avenue

Traffic Safety &

Bike/Pedestrian

Improvements

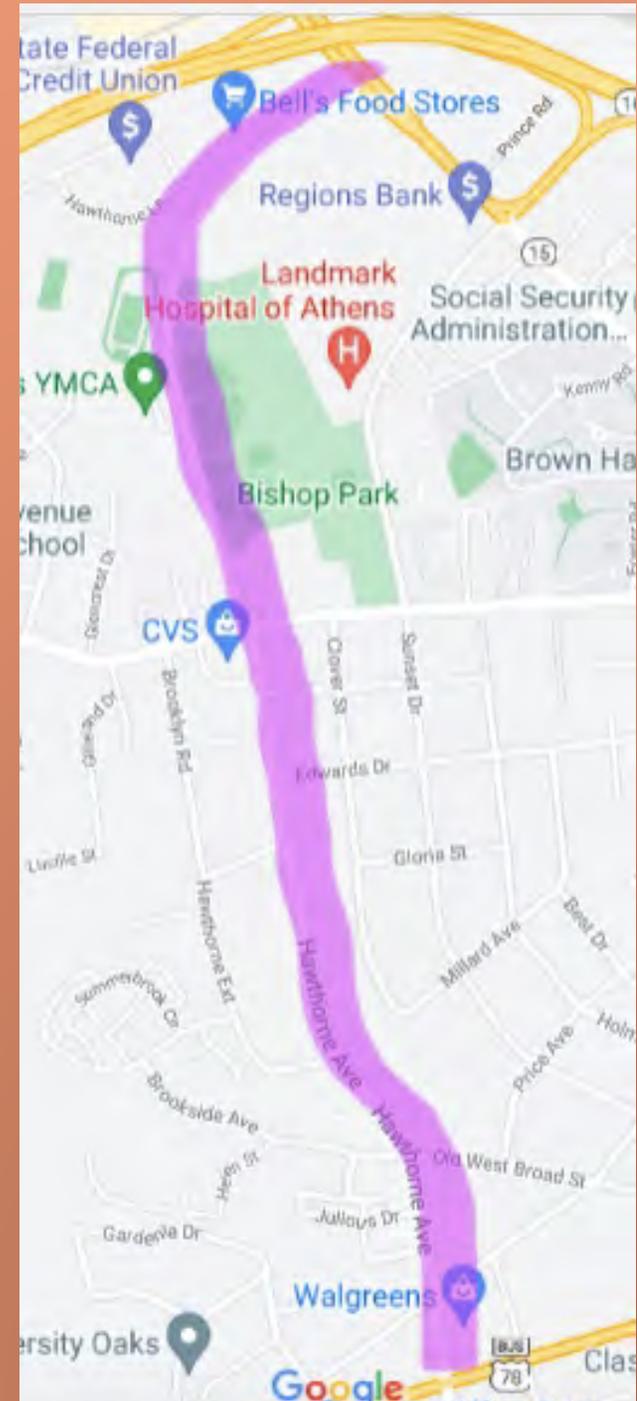
Hawthorne Avenue is classified as
a minor arterial road

It is the primary connector between
two major state highway corridors:

SR129 (Prince Ave/Jefferson Hwy)

&

SR78 (West Broad/Atlanta Hwy)



Hawthorne Avenue is one of the most crash-prone local roads in Athens-Clarke County.

It has never gotten the comprehensive analysis granted similar thoroughfares.

- 3 & 4 lanes
- 6 signalized intersections
- Narrow bike lanes seldom utilized
- Often badly backed up and congested
- When not congested, auto traffic regularly dangerously exceeds the speed limits



Map indicating locations of auto crashes in recent years. Hawthorne Avenue is highlighted in pink.

Hawthorne Avenue is a busy commercial corridor with many minority-owned small businesses, a grocery store, 2 medical office parks, a senior housing community, a very active African American church, and major recreational amenities in Bishop Park & the YMCA.



Dense, walkable neighborhoods along the Hawthorne corridor include:

- **Normaltown** (middle-class single family homes)
- **Columbia Brookside** (mixed-income public/private housing)
- **Brooklyn** (traditionally African American single-family neighborhood)

Few pedestrians utilize Hawthorne—only one side includes a complete sidewalk & the distance between crosswalks is exorbitant. Even fewer cyclists use it as the bike lanes are unprotected, narrow, & auto traffic speeds are dangerously fast.

This project will allow nearby residents greater access to the many amenities, and address auto congestion issues, greatly improving safety and quality of life for all.

It is imperative that any analysis to determine appropriate specific projects include targeted community outreach for public input.

Closing the Equity Gap

- Major corridor through a traditionally African American community
- Hawthorne Ave has been long overlooked for improvements that would benefit nearby residents.
- Thousands of residents live just a few blocks off this commercial corridor, yet few people walk it due to lack of connective sidewalks, no street trees, and minimal crossing opportunities.
- Sidewalk on eastern side is extremely limited
- These conditions add to congestion in that residents are prone to travel by car even when visiting locations only a few blocks away.
- Area youth are also prevented from accessing Bishop Park.
- Improvement to Hawthorne would enable safer walking to nearby schools Oglethorpe & Alps Rd Elementary for area residents.
- Improve access to local Black-owned business

Transit Benefits

- Better pedestrian facilities enable access to public transit
- Two Athens Transit bus routes run on Hawthorne
- Additional routes run along Prince, Oglethorpe, and West Broad—these can be accessed via a short walk along Hawthorne
- Better sidewalks, adequate crosswalks, & safer streets will encourage residents to walk the few blocks to access bus routes

Health & Sustainability

- Safer walking & biking conditions encourage physical activity for nearby residents
- Improved access to recreational facilities additionally encourages physical activity for nearby residents
- Fewer cars & less congestion improves air quality
- Improved air quality=better health for residents & the overall environment

Implementation of existing plans:

- **SPLOST 2011, Project 26, sub-project #3: Hawthorne/Oglethorpe intersection improvement presented July 2021.** Put on hold to consider North end of Hawthorne for 3-laning to include bike facilities. This Plan also indicates an enhanced bike/ped entry into the park from Hawthorne.
- **Bishop Park Master Plan** - Improved in-park path parallels Hawthorne Ave—this path could serve as a connective section of a multi-use path along the North end of Hawthorne
- **Athens in Motion** includes Tier 2 sidewalk project & Tier 1 bike project
- **MACORTS #P-14** – a widening project along Hawthorne, scheduled 2026-35



This project meets all 8 strategic commitments outlined by the ACC Mayor & Commission:

- **Healthy, Sustainable, Livable Community**
- **Transportation Mobility & Connectivity**
- **Shared Prosperity**
- **Safe & Prepared Community**
- **Informed & Engaged Citizens** (comprehensive analysis & public input is a stated goal of the project)
- **Accountable & Responsive Government** (in carrying out aforementioned input)

Meets 11 of 14 Project Selection Criteria:

- Promotes the goal of Improving Equitability of Capital Improvements throughout the Community
- Protects the community's existing transportation infrastructure investments
- Promotes the Upgrade and Continued Use of Alternative Transportation Facilities
- Promotes Increased Access to existing public facilities
- Promotes increased usage of the transit system, including improving pedestrian access to transit facilities
- Maintains or Improves Air Quality
- Reduces Vehicle Miles Traveled and Traffic Congestion
- Reduces time spent Traveling in Vehicles
- Continues TSPLOST 2018 Corridor Improvements or transportation related safety improvements
- Promotes Health & Safety
- Continues Sidewalk & Multi-Use Trail Construction

“Triple Bottom Line”

Economic Prosperity:

- Increase accessibility to goods, services, & jobs for nearby residents
- Increased accessibility = increased revenue for local businesses
- Increased opportunity for nearby residents to discover local businesses

Social Well-Being:

- Increased access to public recreational facilities = healthy activities & social opportunities
- Increased freedom of movement for young people
- Increased connectivity between neighborhoods = increased social capital between diverse communities

Environmental Impact

Residents are more likely to walk or bike on safer streets & sidewalks or use public transit are not driving cars. This decreases vehicle miles & lowers traffic congestion in the immediate area. Carbon emissions decrease, pollution is lowered, exercise is enabled, benefiting the health of nearby residents, the greater community, & the entire planet.

