

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

**SUBJECT:** East Side Corridor Improvements Project

**DATE:** January 4, 2024

**BUDGET INFORMATION:**

REVENUES:	\$18,000	Remaining funds for East Side Corridor Improvements
	<u>\$</u>	<u>Potential SPLOST 2011 Project 21 Funds</u>
	\$18,000	Total Available

EXPENSES: Not yet determined  
ANNUAL: \$0  
CAPITAL: \$0  
OTHER:

FUNDING SOURCE: General Fund

**COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON:** February 6, 2024

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**PURPOSE:**

To request the Mayor and Commission:

- a. Direct the Manager to undertake an art selection process for a placemaking project in the Gaines School Corridor;
- b. Request the Athens Cultural Affairs Commission (ACAC) provide recommendations in terms of a location and artist;
- c. Request ACAC consider recommending additional funds for the East Side Corridor Improvements project to create a more meaningful project; and
- d. Authorize the mayor and appropriate staff to execute all related documents.

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**HISTORY:**

1. On November 2, 2010, Athens-Clarke County voters approved the SPLOST 2011 Program Referendum. This referendum included the Public Art Program project (SPLOST 2011 Project #21) as funding to provide for the selection and placement of public art within designated areas to include parks, city entrance corridors, green ways, and government buildings.
2. On December 7, 2010, the Mayor and Commission (M&C), adopted Ordinance Chapter 1-25 creating the Athens Cultural Affairs Commission (ACAC) to advise on cultural affairs and aesthetic development of the built environment and to identify funding for public art.

3. On December 6, 2011, the M&C adopted Ordinance Chapter 1-25-6 identifying Public Art funding of 1% within SPLOST projects to go toward public art, starting with SPLOST 2011.
4. On June 7, 2011, M&C adopted the FY12 budget containing the first operational budget for ACAC of \$12,000.
5. On October 23, 2013, M&C amended Ordinance Chapter 1-25 regarding the ACAC increasing their membership from nine to eleven voting members.
6. On February 22, 2022, the ACAC presented a draft operations and capital budget to Mayor and Commission within the then Independent Agency budget hearing sessions.
7. On June 7, 2022, the Mayor and Commission approved the FY24 Operating and Capital Budget for ACCGov. A Commission Defined Option was approved which included \$30,000 for “East Side Corridor Improvements.”
8. In February of 2023, the Landscape Management Division of Central Services installed two beautification plantings at the junction of Barnett Shoals Road and Whitehall Road as part of the East Side Corridor Improvements. These plantings are comprised of hydrangeas, azaleas, and yucca. Additionally, replacement plants were placed within two crosswalk refuges along Cedar Shoals Drive to replace plantings that were damaged by vehicles. Approximately \$12,000 was spent in efforts in these locations.
9. On March 1, 2023, an Attorney’s Office interpretation of ACCGov’s Ordinance Chapter 1-25 surmised that there is no budgetary authority delegated to ACAC.
10. During 2023, District 8 Commission Carol Myers convened several public meetings of East Side residents, and Koons Environmental produced drawings for potential beautification efforts, including the Gaines School corridor.
11. In November 2023, ACCGov commissioners Carol Myers, Patrick Davenport, and Tiffany Taylor met with Manager Williams to discuss potential art projects for the East Side, specifically in the and around the Gaines School corridor.

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**FACTS & ISSUES:**

1. Remaining funds from the East Side Corridor Improvements Project present an opportunity to create a site for an original work of public art for the East Side Athens community. Public art in placemaking projects invite meaningful social interactions, highlight community assets and foster a sense of belonging. Beautification of public streets and pedestrian corridors increase civic pride and provide a sense of place.
2. The ACAC works to meet the duties outlined in ACCGov’s Ordinance Chapter 1-25-4: **Sec. 1-25-4. Duties of the Commission.** *The Athens Cultural Affairs Commission shall be vested with*

*the responsibility of advising the Mayor and Commission with respect to all aspects of planning, programming, procurement, installation, operation, inventory and maintenance of public art projects and artworks, including art donations, commissions, and temporary projects.*

3. Through approval of the M&C, it is requested that the Manager direct Leisure Services staff to facilitate a Requests for Proposal process for an art installation in the Gaines School corridor.
4. Recognizing that the \$18,000 of remaining Beautification funds may not be wholly sufficient for a quality art piece, it is requested the M&C direct the Manager to have Leisure Services Arts Division staff to present a proposal to ACAC for them to consider recommending additional SPLOST funds to augment the project.
5. Through the various public meetings, prepared information, and in conversation with the three commissioners from the east side of the County, it is envisioned that the art installation would take place in the Gaines School corridor, with the northern terminus at Lexington Road and the southern terminus where Gaines School turns in to Barnett Shoals. Staff recommends that the M&C seek an advisory recommendation on location from ACAC.
6. If approved, it is envisioned that the process would take place in Calendar Year (CY) 2024 and the installation by CY25.
7. This recommendation supports the following ACCGov Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy:
  - Good Neighbors Goal, Strategy D: *Drive community transformation with a focus on creating spaces that are respectful and welcoming: Develop a culture of place-making through applicable projects.*

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**OPTIONS:**

1. Mayor and Commission:
  - a. Direct the Manager to undertake an art selection process for a placemaking project in the Gaines School Corridor;
  - b. Request the Athens Cultural Affairs Commission (ACAC) provide recommendations in terms of a location and artist;
  - c. Request ACAC consider recommending additional funds for the East Side Corridor Improvements project to create a more meaningful project; and
  - d. Authorize the mayor and appropriate staff to execute all related documents
2. Mayor and Commission deny the request.
3. Mayor and Commission defined option.

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**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:**

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**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:** Option #1 a, b, c, & d



Manager

January 11, 2024

Date: