



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL PLAN

JANUARY 12, 2024



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL PLAN

January 12, 2024

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## GEORGIA HI-LO

Glenn Newsome	<i>Board Member</i>
Jess Shipman	<i>Staff Media/Newsletter</i>
Jesse Lindsley	<i>Board Member</i>
Joseph Sumner	<i>Board Member</i>
Kelly Etheridge	<i>Staff Grants</i>
Mary Charles Howard	<i>Staff Director</i>
Mitch Sheppard	<i>Board Member</i>
Philip Wu	<i>Staff Kids Bike League</i>

## GEORGIA POWER

Charlie Moseley	<i>Statewide Economic Developer</i>
-----------------	-------------------------------------

## BULLOCH COUNTY

### Bulloch County

Billy Allen	<i>Development Authority Chairman</i>
Cindy Steinman	<i>Assistant. County Manager</i>
Curt Deal	<i>County Commissioner</i>
Dink Butler	<i>Public Works Director</i>
Eddie Cannon	<i>Parks &amp; Recreation Director</i>
James Pope	<i>Planning and Development</i>
Tom Couch	<i>County Manager</i>

### Bulloch Development Authority

Benjy Thompson	<i>Director</i>
----------------	-----------------

### City of Statesboro

Amanda Clements	<i>Keep Statesboro-Bulloch Beautiful</i>
Charles Penny	<i>Assistant Mayor/City Manager</i>
Jason Boyles	<i>Assistant City Manager</i>
John Washington	<i>Public Works</i>
Jonathan McCollar	<i>Mayor</i>
Olympia Gaines	<i>Assistant to City Manager</i>
Shari Barr	<i>Council Member</i>

### Statesboro Convention & Visitors Bureau

Barry Turner	<i>Board member</i>
Becky Sanders	<i>Director</i>

### Ogeechee Riverkeepers

Melanie Sparrow	<i>Education and Outreach Coordinator</i>
-----------------	---

### Statesboro Convention & Visitors Bureau

Barry Turner	<i>Board Member</i>
Becky Sanders	<i>Director</i>

### Botanic Garden at GSU

Carolyn Altman	<i>Director</i>
----------------	-----------------

### Community Representative

John Roach	<i>Market President, Morris Bank</i>
Tom McKeithen	<i>Owner, McKeithen's True Value Hardwar</i>

## CHATHAM COUNTY

### Chatham County

Corey Harper	<i>Parks &amp; Recreation</i>
Deana Brooks	<i>Engineering Department</i>
Holly Holdsworth	<i>Deputy Director Parks &amp; Recreation</i>
Jackie Jackson	<i>Resilience Program Administrator</i>
Nathaniel Panther	<i>Assistant County Engineer</i>
Pamela Bernard	<i>Senior Transportation Engineer</i>
Terry Shoop	<i>Asst. Chief of Police</i>

### City of Pooler

Kiley Fusco	<i>City Clerk</i>
Matt Saxon	<i>Assistant City Manager</i>
Robert Byrd	<i>City Manager</i>

### City of Bloomingdale

Charles Akridge	<i>City Administrator</i>
-----------------	---------------------------

### City of Savannah

Nick Pumbo	<i>Alderman, District 4</i>
------------	-----------------------------

### Healthy Savannah

Armand Turner	<i>Physical Activity Program Manager</i>
Paula Kreissler	<i>Executive Director</i>

### Bike Walk Savannah

Caila Brown	<i>Executive Director</i>
-------------	---------------------------

### City of Port Wentworth

Omar Senati-Martinez	<i>Public Works Director</i>
----------------------	------------------------------

### East Coast Greenway

Brent Buice	<i>Director East Coast Greenway</i>
-------------	-------------------------------------

### Tide to Town

Denise Grabowski	<i>Board Member</i>
Laura Ballock	<i>Board Member</i>



## EFFINGHAM COUNTY

### Effingham County

Chelsie Fernald	<i>Planner</i>
Lara Hoffman	<i>County Project Manager</i>
Marie Todd	<i>Assistant to County Manager</i>
Mark Lastinger	<i>Public Information</i>
Tim Callanan	<i>County Manager</i>

### County Commissioners

Forrest Floyd	<i>District 1 Commissioner</i>
Jamie Deloach	<i>District 3 Commissioner</i>
Phil Keifer	<i>District 5 Commissioner</i>
Reggie Loper	<i>District 4 Commissioner</i>
Roger Burdette	<i>District 2 Commissioner</i>
Wesley Corbitt	<i>Chairman At Large</i>

### City of Guyton

Hursula Pelote	<i>Guyton City Council</i>
Meketa Brown	<i>Guyton City Manager</i>
Russ Deen	<i>Mayor</i>

### Georgia Hi-Lo

Alden Strandburg	<i>Hi-Lo Staff (Guyton) + Bike Effingham</i>
------------------	--

### Bike Effingham

Ashley Parker	<i>Founder</i>
---------------	----------------

### Effingham Herald

Barbara Augsdorfer	<i>Editor</i>
--------------------	---------------

### Pacific Cycle

João Perretti	<i>Director of Operations</i>
---------------	-------------------------------

### Community Representative

Mike Gerwig	<i>Citizen</i>
Theodore Hamby	<i>Citizen</i>

## EMANUEL COUNTY

### Emanuel County

Guy Singletary	<i>County Manager</i>
----------------	-----------------------

### Swainsboro

Al Lawson	<i>City Administrator</i>
Greg Bennett	<i>Mayor of Swainsboro</i>
Hermann Middlebrooks	<i>City Manager</i>

### Twin City

Eugenia "Gina" Ducker	<i>City Clerk</i>
Matt Donaldson	<i>Mayor of Twin City</i>

### Georgia Hi-Lo

Brent Freeman	<i>Staff Twin City</i>
---------------	------------------------

### East Georgia State College

Casey Fountain	<i>Director of Institutional Advancement</i>
David Schecter	<i>College President</i>

## HANCOCK COUNTY

### Hancock County

Alma Harper	<i>Hancock County Schools Superintendent</i>
Gloria Cooper	<i>Hancock County Commissioners</i>
Sistie Hudson	<i>Board of Commissioners Chairman</i>

### City of Sparta

Allen Haywood	<i>Mayor</i>
---------------	--------------

### Georgia Hi-Lo

Tyrontha Nolley	<i>Kids Bike League Manager</i>
-----------------	---------------------------------

### REACH/HHIP

Alicia Wright	<i>SHINE Program Manager</i>
D'Chambree Harris	<i>Program Coordinator</i>
Karen Ebey-Tessendorf	<i>Director</i>
Morgan McLendon	<i>Community Health Coordinator</i>
Ted Reid	<i>County Commissioner</i>
Williesha Hatcher	<i>Teacher</i>

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (CONTINUED)

## JOHNSON COUNTY

### Johnson County

Bill Lindsey	<i>County Manager</i>
Christopher Watkins	<i>Superintendent Johnson County Schools</i>
Derek Powell	<i>Recreation Director</i>
Hugh Darnley	<i>Economic Development</i>
Mickey Wright	<i>Road Department</i>

### City of Wrightsville

Janibeth Outlaw	<i>Mayor</i>
-----------------	--------------

### Community Representatives

Donnie Sweat	<i>Sweat &amp; Harrison, LLC</i>
Jonah Simmons	<i>Bicycle Advocate</i>

## WASHINGTON COUNTY

### Washington County

Bobby Jackson	<i>Board Member</i>
Chris Hutchings	<i>County Administrator</i>
Dustin Peebles	<i>County Manager</i>
Katie Moncus	<i>President of Chamber of Commerce</i>

### City of Sandersville

Judy McCorkle	<i>City Administrator</i>
Robert Eubanks	<i>Public Works</i>
Carson Daley	<i>Mainstreet Downtown Director</i>

### City of Tennille

Eartha Cummings	<i>Mayor</i>
Mike Wiggins	<i>Engineering Director</i>

### Georgia Hi-Lo

Mary Hilson	<i>Staff Sandersville</i>
-------------	---------------------------

### GDOT

Charles King	<i>Project Manager</i>
Yun Luo	<i>Project Manager</i>
Felecia Basolo	<i>Contractor</i>

### Community Representatives

Eddy Turner	<i>Waco Farm Bureau</i>
Frank Young	<i>Burgess Pigment</i>
Ken Bibb	<i>Geo. D. Warthen Bank</i>
Lyle Lansdell	<i>Citizen</i>
Parrish David	<i>Citizens Bank</i>

## CONSULTING TEAM

### PATH Foundation

Eric Ganther	<i>Transportation Planner</i>
Greta DeMayo	<i>Executive Director</i>

### KAIZEN Collaborative

Andie Eller	<i>Associate Landscape Architect</i>
Cooper Brock	<i>Trail Planner</i>
Macy Khamsa	<i>Associate Landscape Architect</i>
Nico Shen	<i>Senior Landscape Architect</i>







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3 GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL ALIGNMENT STRATEGY</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>8</b>	Model Projects	40
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>10</b>	Hancock County	42
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>15</b>	Washington County	54
Vision	16	Johnson County	66
Thinking About Trails	18	Emanuel County	78
Project impact	19	Bulloch County	88
Community support	19	Effingham County	104
Risks and Mitigations	20	Chatham County	115
PATH Foundation and Trail Planning	21	<b>4 DESIGN STANDARDS</b>	<b>129</b>
Strategic Timeline	21	Branding Standards	130
Document Structure	21	Sign Standards	132
<b>2 PLANNING PROCESS</b>	<b>23</b>	Amenities	135
Plan Origins	24	Construction guidelines	138
Project Scope and Study Area	25	<b>5 GEORGIA HI-LO NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>153</b>
Inspiration	26	Looking Ahead	154
Data Collection	29	Hi-Lo 2030 – Launch	155
Regional and State Entities	30	Hi-Lo 2040 – Persistence	157
Working Group Formation and Coordination	31	Hi-Lo 2050 – Arrival	158
Project kickoff	31	<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>161</b>
Public engagement	35	Responses to Planning Questions by County	162
		Survey Responses	164
		Potential Trail Opportunities	182
		General Guidelines for Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails on Georgia Power Transmission Right-of-Ways	189





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## VISION

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is a vision to connect Athens to Tybee Island via a paved multi-use trail that, when complete, will be the longest paved trail in America. The Hi-Lo Trail will cross eight counties in east-central Georgia and empower small town economies by supporting local businesses through tourism and attracting new residents. It will improve community health by providing opportunities to safely walk and bike on inviting trails. As a facility open for all, the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will enable people with disabilities, senior citizens, and families with children to enjoy Georgia's great outdoors. The vision for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is spelled out in Chapter 1.



*Approximate route of Georgia Hi-Lo through participating counties.*

## PLANNING PROCESS

In February 2023, the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative – a non-profit entity organized in support of the trail vision – contracted the PATH Foundation (PATH) to conduct a plan for the trail. PATH is a small non-profit based in Atlanta that has planned, designed, and built over 320 miles of paved multi-use trails over the last 32 years primarily in Georgia. PATH has raised \$65 million in private donations to match more than \$255 million in public funding for building these trails.

The planning process for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail kicked off in March 2023 and wrapped up in January 2024. With advance outreach work conducted by the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative to identify stakeholders, PATH organized working groups in each of the Hi-Lo counties to guide planning and public outreach efforts. PATH met with each working group a total of five times to provide presentations and solicit input and feedback on the trail alignment, public engagement advice, and proposals for “model projects” in each county.

PATH also conducted public meetings in central locations in each of the counties. Presentations were given; display boards described trail types, trail materials, and potential alignments throughout the county; and a public survey was deployed. In response to feedback from the public meetings and from the survey, PATH, Hi-Lo staff, and the Hi-Lo counties agreed to focus subsequent planning efforts on model projects to demonstrate to citizens the intended purpose of trails and how the community would benefit from them. The planning process is detailed in Chapter 2.

## MODEL PROJECTS

Model projects are smaller projects designed to jumpstart progress for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail while giving citizens a positive experience of trails. Key model project selection criteria include: (1) has political support, (2) connects users on Day One to places they want to go, (3) is financially and technically feasible, and (4) requires relatively few private property easements.

Working closely with the stakeholders, PATH outlined model projects in each county. The model projects are primarily within or immediately adjacent to small towns and cities. They rely heavily on publicly owned land – parks, schools, and roadway right of way. Some also rely on easements from railroads and power companies. Maps showing the model projects are shown below. Details regarding the Georgia Hi-Lo alignment strategy and supporting model projects are provided in Chapter 3.

## MODEL PROJECT COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

The PATH team assembled cost estimates for the model projects based on a conceptual design that includes design and construction costs for at-grade trails, bridges, elevated structures, and trail amenities. These estimates are derived from actual costs experienced by PATH in the fall of 2023. These costs exclude easement acquisition, and inflation escalations. Cost estimate details for each Hi-Lo county can be found in Chapter 3.

The goal for the model projects is to have them substantially completed by 2030. In so doing, approximately 37 miles of the estimated 211-mile Georgia Hi-Lo Trail would be complete by 2030 – or about 17%.

County	Model Project Mileage	Total Cost	Timeline
Hancock	2.8	\$3,724,000	2024-2030
Washington	3.7	\$7,010,000	2024-2030
Johnson	2.8	\$3,676,000	2024-2029
Emanuel	4.4	\$4,558,000	2024-2029
Bulloch	4.2	\$7,536,000	2024-2034
Effingham	10.2	\$12,400,000	2024-2029
Chatham	9.0	\$12,486,000	2024-2030

## WHAT THE GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL WILL LOOK LIKE

In Chapter 4, PATH lays out the branding strategy and design standards for trail amenities; which include trail signage, kiosk signs, wayfinding signs, regulatory signs, mile markers, benches, and waste receptacles. Concrete is the preferred material because it is long-lasting, low maintenance, and smooth enough for wheelchairs, walkers, and bicycles of all kinds. Asphalt is not recommended due to lower life expectancy, high maintenance costs, and proclivity for disrupting wheelchairs and walkers. Crusher run (a kind of gravel mixed with sand) could be used as an interim strategy to get trail segments built quickly with lower budgets. PATH cost estimates in Chapter 3 provide the additional cost of the interim crusher run stage on trail phases where it could yield value to the community.

## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL COMPLETION STRATEGY

In Chapter 5, PATH recommends that the overall trail covering more than 210 miles across eight counties, multiple cities, and across varied terrain and existing conditions should be thought of as a 26-year project broken into three conceptual phases: launch, persistence, and arrival.

To achieve this ambitious goal – building a paved multi-use trail across east-central Georgia – that connects Athens to Tybee Island will require substantial public support. This support must be nurtured with an ongoing outreach campaign that keeps citizens informed of trail planning, design, and construction progress and enlists the time and talents of volunteers to educate the community about the value of trails and the process for bringing them to east-central Georgia.









# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## VISION

Imagine, it is 2049, and kids in nursery school today are returning home for their 10-year high school reunion. They went away to school and/or to begin their work lives in bigger cities, but they feel nostalgic for the relaxed and friendly feel of rural Georgia. A group of them decides to take a few extra days of vacation and ride bikes down to Savannah. They spend a night camping in George L Smith State Park, and another night at a bed-and-breakfast in Guyton, before riding through Savannah and on to Tybee Island, where they spend the night and spend a day at the beach. On the way back, they spend a night in Statesboro and another night in Tennille where they meet more of their high school friends and attend the music festival celebrating its 25th anniversary.

The young adults, somewhat weary of their bigger city lives, go to their reunion and reminisce and talk with each other about the next stage of their lives. Unlike in the past, when most stayed in the bigger cities because there was more to do, a number of them made plans to return to their hometowns and continue the traditions of east central Georgia, raising families and participating in the culture. The decisions they make reflect a new trend as more young people make similar choices because they can enjoy many of the benefits of urban life in rural settings without the hassle of urban living.



*Joyful parade in Freedom Park in Atlanta, Georgia.*

Thanks to powerful internet connections and a regional multi-use trail and the commercial and cultural development that it has spawned, they can enjoy all of the benefits of living in rural Georgia. They use the trail to access peaceful, beautiful natural areas for their exercise and well-being, to get the grandparents out of the house, and to teach the kids the joys and independence that come from the simple act of riding a bicycle. They use the trail to get to town to run errands or to show visitors around. They

enjoy the trail and are thankful that their parents and grandparents believed in their rural east Georgia communities and were willing to work hard and attend meetings, write letters, raise money, clear brush, and work with farmers and lobby state government to make it all happen.

This vision is called the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail, and this document lays out what the vision is, how it will be valuable to east central Georgia, and how it will be implemented with the hard work and



dedication of a growing band of small-government staff and citizen advocates. The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is a 211-mile, multi-use trail that will empower rural Georgia by bringing economic, health, and social benefits to the communities through which it passes. Crossing beautiful Georgia countryside from the Piedmont region near Athens, down through rolling hills and timberlands, across the coastal plain through historic Savannah, and over the coastal marshes to arrive at Tybee Island and the Atlantic Ocean. In the last few decades, Americans of all ages across the country have discovered the joy and value of long-distance trails. Long-distance trails enable all-day or multi-day excursions across the countryside and through smaller towns that otherwise might go unnoticed by travelers in cars. The slower pace of bicycle travel combined with the physical and mental health benefits are attractive to residents and visitors, who spend money at local restaurants, lodging, souvenir shops, and convenience stores. Well-designed long-distance trails create opportunities for visitors and locals to encounter one another, share stories, and learn from one another.

Visitors are looking for more than pretty scenery and lovely architecture, they seek a sense of place – how do residents inhabit their towns? How do the residents come together? What does life feel like in rural Georgia? Locals appreciate the opportunity to tell their stories and take

pride in the heritage of their communities. The visitors then spread the word about their positive experiences with their friends and neighbors back home creating a virtuous cycle of trail use and business demand, attracting some number of visitors to consider moving their families to the smaller towns and thus helping to keep alive the proud traditions of rural Georgia.



*Trails are for all ages.*

# THINKING ABOUT TRAILS

When thinking about trails, consider them as linear parks that connect places people want to go so that users experience the destination and the joy of getting there. The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail connects points of interest for its entire length – the courthouse in Sparta, the murals in Sandersville, the shops and restaurants taking root in Tennille, the train depot in Wrightsville, the colleges in Swainsboro, the state park in Twin City, the churches and social clubs of Statesboro, the schools and ballfields of Guyton, the regional parks and recreation centers of west Chatham, and on through the history of Savannah and the sandy beaches of Tybee Island. All of these are accessed in a relaxed and beautiful way on the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail.

Schools are key destinations in all of the Georgia Hi-Lo communities because young people want and need safe and inviting places to walk, run, bike, and scoot – places which are currently lacking in most of east-central Georgia – rural areas, small towns, and suburban areas alike. By creating safe and inviting transportation options, trails enable a vital sense of independence and confidence in young students through the physicality of being in the actual world untethered from the many electronic distractions of today.

If you can remember your first bike ride without training wheels, or if you can see a child newly empowered on a bicycle with all the accompanying smiles

and squeals, you have a sense of the value of trails. If you have witnessed seniors on bicycles and folks using wheelchairs to access nature and fresh air, you understand the value of trails. Trails welcome all ages and physical abilities and reward exploration from tentative first steps to state-spanning epic bike rides.

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will do all of these things – keep future generations in rural communities, boost tourism, bring locals and visitors together, provide friends, relatives, and children with fresh experiences, and connect walkers and bicyclists to key destinations, all while giving everyone a chance to enjoy Georgia's great outdoors – healthy, happy, and together. This document lays out how the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will come together – where the trail could go, what the trail will look like, how, and when it will be built, how much it will cost, and who will pay for it. This document lays out a plan for manifesting the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail that relies on community input and enthusiasm and is prepared by a team with deep experience in trail building – the PATH Foundation.



*Georgia Hi-Lo Founder and Executive Director, Mary Charles Howard (Right) with Lyle Lansdell of Forest Grove Preserve (Left) of the Kids Bike League Program.*



## PROJECT IMPACT

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will have a substantial and measurable impact on participating communities. These include positive impacts on quality of life (measured through survey), economic activity (measured through sales tax revenue), and travel mode (measured by traffic counts on trails and roadways). PATH recommends that the Hi-Lo Foundation works with the participating communities on gathering “before” data for the model projects just before the beginning of construction and again one to two years after the project is completed. The measurable impacts will help assure citizens and their elected leaders that the investment in trails is worthwhile and make subsequent planning and funding easier.

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is also environmentally feasible. By leveraging publicly owned land and/or rights of way along existing travel corridors, the trail will have a very limited impact on flora and fauna that will be more than offset by plantings of native trees and shrubs in the landscape buffers around the project. The Trail will also seek to make extensive use of unused railroad and canal rights of way to provide access to natural settings by repurposing existing land disturbances. The project will have a net positive effect on the environment from an education and access perspective in that it will enable county residents to better experience their environment and advocate for its protection and maintenance.

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is feasible from both capital and operating budget perspectives. The capital requirements for the model projects in each county are outlined in Chapter 3. The average cost per mile across all the model projects using 2023 dollars is \$1.4M. These capital costs could be compared to other transportation projects which cost an order of magnitude more, but the Georgia Hi-Lo will also act like a linear park through communities offering recreation in addition to transportation. The costs for the 2.8-mile model project in Hancock County, for example, are roughly similar to the costs of building a new park, but the linear park is closer to people’s homes making access easier for those with mobility challenges and/or lower incomes. From a maintenance perspective, the hardscape materials recommended for the project – concrete and steel or aluminum – are typically very lowcost to maintain. The largest ongoing expense will be landscape maintenance, which could be extended from existing contracts but that must be considered in advance of trail opening.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Engaging the community successfully must happen for this project to succeed. This is not a project sponsored by the Georgia Department of Transportation or a department with the weight of state government behind it. The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will happen from the ground up with the support of ordinary citizens and small-town residents who believe in the future of their communities and are willing to share the vision with their families, friends, and neighbors. Included are key stakeholders such as landowners and civic leaders who can donate resources to match grant funds or land easements for trail alignments. The Georgia Hi-Lo Board will need to strategize politically to find the right time and the right assemblage of stakeholders to propel the project forward. It is PATH’s experience that opportunities begin to appear more frequently once a few successes can be pointed to. But this process will have to repeat in each of the participating counties and perseverance will be necessary to achieve the end goal. PATH recommends a mix of routine and novel strategies that blend information with fun so that the community comes to associate the Georgia Hi-Lo with a good time.

## RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

The primary risk to the project is political. For example, the trail will rely on a mix of funding sources including philanthropic and governmental monies that may raise suspicion. Or unfounded fears of crime may lead some to organize against the trail. Trail leaders need to be proactive in addressing concerns as soon as they are raised but should be forgiving in their response. Over the 211+ miles of trail there will be many locations where the community is strongly supportive and others where the community is not quite ready. It will take many years to build the trail, if the time is not right or if the proper assemblage of people cannot yet be made – then Trail leaders should shift their energy to where it will be most productive.

A secondary risk to the project is leadership burnout. The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is a multi-decade project. It needs leadership from the Board and in the community and support staff all of whom are willing to commit to this long timeframe. Leadership must also cultivate the support and understanding of the citizens (and voters!) over the long haul – keeping the goal in mind while working daily to achieve it. Frustration over momentary setbacks must not cloud the vision; and arguments over strategy to resolve political issues must not disrupt the focus. The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is a cause worth fighting for because the residents of east-central Georgia need the benefits that it can bring.



*Silver Comet Trail in Western Georgia.*

Photo courtesy of Trail Link. Accessed via [https://cloudfront.traillink.com/photos/silver-comet-trail\\_136248\\_sc.jpg](https://cloudfront.traillink.com/photos/silver-comet-trail_136248_sc.jpg)



## PATH FOUNDATION AND TRAIL PLANNING

The PATH Foundation has been planning, designing, and building long-distance trails for 32 years. The Silver Comet Trail in west Georgia and its sister trail in Alabama, the Chief Ladiga Trail, allow trail users to travel 90 miles from Atlanta to Anniston on paved surfaces through inspiring natural surroundings. Shorter regional trails built by PATH stitch together natural areas and small towns including trails in and around Beaufort, South Carolina, Columbus, Georgia, Woodbine, Georgia, and most recently Union Point, Georgia. In the Atlanta area, PATH has built many trails through urban and suburban areas including the Stone Mountain Trail, the Arabia Mountain Trail, and the Rockdale County Trail. Other trails form loops around cities as diverse as Carrollton (the Greenbelt) or Atlanta (the BeltLine).

When complete, the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will be the longest paved trail in America. Achieving this lofty goal will require a multi-layered strategy to make progress where progress is possible and to make adjustments and compromises where necessary to keep the project moving forward. Georgia Hi-Lo implementation will seek to leverage decommissioned rail lines, public roads, power line easements, public park and school land, state parks, and privately donated and purchased easements to stitch together the 211+ mile, multi-use trail linking Athens to Savannah and beyond to Tybee Island.

## STRATEGIC TIMELINE

As described in Chapter 3, the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will be built strategically, starting with “model projects” in each county. The purpose of these model projects is to show citizens what trails look like and how they can use the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail to enhance quality of life and support economic development. The plan details how by 2030, approximately 36 miles of trails in the form of phased model projects will be built, representing 17% of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail’s overall estimated length. Subsequent phases will be built over the ensuing 20 years so that by 2050, the trail will be complete.

## DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

This document is divided into five chapters – (1) introduction, (2) planning process, (3) alignment strategy and model projects, (4) design guidelines, and (5) the implementation plan. Given that plan readers are most likely to be interested in work to be done in their particular county, the third chapter is subdivided into stand-alone sections for each county. The structure of these segments is the same for each county and includes paragraphs and sub-sections that are largely repetitive across the counties. This repetition ensures that readers focused on one county will have all of the information necessary to process the Georgia Hi-Lo Plan in their county without having to flip back and forth for relevant information.

Throughout this document, the opportunities are identified, but the needs of the community are foremost – what does a small town in east central Georgia need to thrive in the next generation? Come take a ride with us and find out!



A large, solid teal-colored shape that curves from the left edge of the frame towards the center, resembling a quarter-circle or a large arc.

# **2 PLANNING PROCESS**

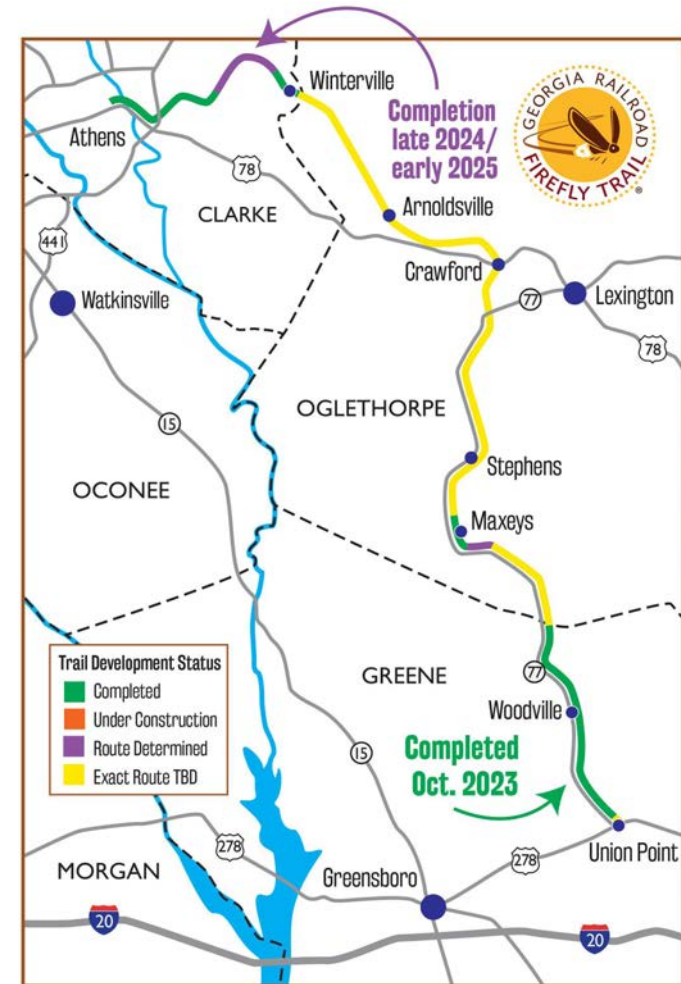
## PLAN ORIGINS

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Initiative is a non-profit entity that was established in 2019 to raise money and awareness regarding the planning, design, and construction of a paved, long-distance, multi-use trail in east-central Georgia. Georgia Hi-Lo has a five-member volunteer Board and eight staff volunteers, including Mary Charles Howard, the executive director.

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is directly inspired by the Firefly Trail, a paved trail aligned primarily along an abandoned branch of the Georgia Railroad – running 39-miles from downtown Athens through communities in Clarke, Oglethorpe, and Greene counties before ending in Union Point, Georgia. Approximately 15 miles of trail have been completed with segments in Athens, Winterville, Maxeys, Woodville, and Union Point funded by SPLOST dollars, county parks funds, state grants, and philanthropic donations.<sup>1</sup>

In February 2023, the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative – a non-profit entity organized in support of the trail vision – contracted the PATH Foundation (PATH) to conduct a plan for the trail. PATH is a small non-profit based in Atlanta that has planned, designed, and built over 320 miles of paved multi-use trails over the last 32 years primarily in Georgia. PATH has raised \$65 million in private donations to match more than \$255 million in public funding for building these trails.

The plan is to be based on data collection, stakeholder input, and public input with the collaboration of leadership and staff in each of the subject counties. The planning project kicked off in March 2023 with a virtual meeting of members from 7 of the 8 counties.<sup>2</sup>



*Firefly Trail Concept as of June 2023.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fireflytrail.com/>

<sup>2</sup> Greene County did not attend and has not participated in the trail planning effort to date. Greene County staff indicated that they have too few staff resources to both build their portion of the Firefly project and plan for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail at the same time. They indicated that once the Firefly is complete and county leaders have had a chance to assess the success and the value, they will work with Georgia Hi-Lo on next steps.

## PROJECT SCOPE AND STUDY AREA

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is envisioned to go from Athens to Savannah and onto Tybee Island. The map shown to the right conveys key destinations confirmed in the planning effort and the concept of connecting them together. Precise alignments are not shown on the map because they have yet to be solidified by the stakeholders along the overall route. The PATH team identified hypothetical alignments relying primarily on existing roads across the counties – these are available in the appendix – but they are for discussion purposes only – final routes will be determined in future county-specific planning efforts.

For the scope of this project, the PATH team focused on (1) identifying model projects in each of the eight subject counties and (2) providing sufficient detail to move these model projects into design and engineering when funding is identified. The scope also includes cost estimates, an evaluation of funding strategies, and schedules for the overall Georgia Hi-Lo Trail (see Chapter 5) and specific model project schedules for each county.



*Approximate route of Georgia Hi-Lo through participating counties.*



# INSPIRATION

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is not the first long-distance trail to be planned and built in the United States or Georgia. Since the 1970s, long-distance trails have been built along formerly active transportation corridors such as railroads and canals. Many of these trails are “soft surface” meaning they use some combination of gravel, crushed concrete, limestone, etc. Instead of concrete or asphalt. The list of trails below is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather descriptive and inspirational with a discussion of the similarities and differences to the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail.

## SILVER COMET AND CHIEF LADIGA TRAILS<sup>1</sup>

- This 100-mile paved trail connects downtown Atlanta to Anniston, Alabama. It follows the former Silver Comet Railroad right of way acquired by state DOTs in the 1970s. Trail construction began in 2000 and large portions were completed by 2012. Today it is 95% complete with the last 5 miles in the planning and design phase.
- The Silver Comet is similar to the Georgia Hi-Lo in that it connects small towns across rural areas in Georgia, some of which have struggled economically, while others are closer to booming metropolitan areas. The communities themselves were unfamiliar with what trails were and how they could be beneficial. Many citizens had concerns regarding usefulness, crime, and privacy that have since been reduced by overwhelmingly positive experiences with the trail. The trail is managed by the counties it passes through and is supported by community volunteers. The entire trail is paved, primarily with low-maintenance concrete.
- The Silver Comet is different from the Georgia Hi-Lo in that it relies on a single abandoned rail right of way for most of its length meaning land acquisition was less of an issue.



*Silver Comet Trail in Rockmart, Georgia.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.silvercometga.com/>



## PAUL BUNYAN TRAIL<sup>2</sup>

- This 115-mile paved trail connects the small towns of Bemidji and Brainerd in Minnesota's northern lakes region. This trail is popular with tourists and is home to Native American communities and national forests. It is currently America's longest paved trail and is built primarily along an abandoned rail corridor. The paved segments not on the rail bed traverse the Chippewa National Forest with steep elevation changes. The Paul Bunyan is managed by the State of Minnesota's Department of Natural Resources. In the winter, the trail is open to snowmobiles and cross-country skiing. It is believed that Minnesota has the most extensive network of paved trails in rural areas in the United States.
- The Paul Bunyan is similar to the Georgia Hi-Lo in that tourism in an economically disadvantaged area is a key rationale for the project connecting state parks with small towns and other points of interest. It is also a long, paved trail providing easy access to wheelchairs, walkers, and the new variety of battery-propelled scooters.
- The Paul Bunyan is different from the Georgia Hi-Lo in that it was planned and built and is managed in its entirety by a state government department. It is primarily on a single abandoned rail right of way, on national forest land, or state park land, meaning the land acquisition (e.g., easements) was relatively simple.



*Paul Bunyan Trail in northern Minnesota is currently America's longest paved trail.*

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Accessed via <https://www.railstotrails.org/trailblog/2011/february/01/minnesotas-paul-bunyan-state-trail/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_trails/paul\\_bunyan/index.html](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_trails/paul_bunyan/index.html)

## OHIO TO ERIE TRAIL<sup>1</sup>

- The Ohio to Erie Trail will eventually pass through 326 miles of urban and rural Ohio from the Ohio River in Cincinnati to Lake Erie in Cleveland. It is primarily on abandoned rail rights of way and former canal towpaths but there are intermediate segments that run on rural roads. Several portions are complete, for example, the 78-mile paved section between Springfield and Newtown in southern Ohio.
- The Ohio to Erie is similar to some segments of the Georgia Hi-Lo in that it connects small towns in rural areas that have struggled economically. It also connects state parks and larger urban areas and has been successful in part by stitching together trail projects across the state. It is also managed by the counties it passes through and is supported by community volunteers.
- The Ohio to Erie is different from the Georgia Hi-Lo in that it primarily uses abandoned rights of way. It is also a statewide trail that connects Ohio's largest cities. This enables Ohio to Erie to tap into a "State of Ohio story" while also providing a diversity of opportunities for political and philanthropic support from urban and rural areas.

## GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE<sup>2</sup>

- The Great Allegheny Passage (aka "GAP") and C&O Trails combine to form a long trail across rural Maryland and Pennsylvania. The GAP Trail runs 150 miles from Cumberland, Maryland to downtown Pittsburgh. It connects to the C&O Trail in Cumberland which continues another 35 miles eastward into Washington, DC. It is partly paved (20 miles), partly gravel, and partly crushed limestone with paving upgrades happening gradually over the years. It is managed by a conservancy and was completed in 2013.
- The GAP and C&O Trails are inspirational because they were assembled over many years, community by community, from the ground up by a combination of dedicated volunteers and governmental leaders using funding from a wide variety of sources. Today, the trails are primarily maintained by a

conservancy. The GAP also shows how trails can be built with soft surface materials in the beginning and then be gradually replaced with pavement over time.

- The GAP and C&O Trails are different from the Georgia Hi-Lo in that they cross state boundaries, a mountain gap with a large elevation gain, and long-stretches of unpopulated areas. The trails also primarily follow a railroad right of way meaning easement acquisition was more streamlined.

The referenced trails and most other long-distance trails in America are so-called "rail trails," which convert abandoned rail rights of way to recreational trails. Abandoned rail rights of way make for excellent trails because they are single-owner (often a governmental entity), may have usable and level road beds, and other reusable infrastructure such as bridges or retaining walls. To a lesser extent, because there are far fewer of them, canals are another good resource for trails with their long-distance rights of way and adjoining towpaths. Both old canals and railroads also have interesting historical sites along the way helping to tell the story of the land. Historically, rail and canal rights of way began to be considered for long-distance trails in the 1970s and such efforts are still going strong today.

The Firefly Trail, the direct precursor to the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail, is planned to run primarily on an abandoned rail corridor. The Georgia Hi-Lo Plan has identified potential rail trail opportunities in Washington, Johnson, Effingham, and Chatham Counties and canal tow-path opportunities in Chatham County.

The key takeaway from a review of similar long-distance trails is that, regardless of their structure, they are critical drivers of economic development and community identity in small towns and rural areas and offer urban areas more peaceful ways of leaving the city than navigating traffic in automobiles.

1 [https://www.ohioerietrail.org/content.aspx?page\\_id=0&club\\_id=146576](https://www.ohioerietrail.org/content.aspx?page_id=0&club_id=146576)

2 <https://gaptrail.org/>

3 <https://mostateparks.com/park/katy-trail-state-park>



## KATY TRAIL STATE PARK<sup>3</sup>

- At 240 miles, the Katy Trail State Park is the longest-developed rail trail in the United States. It has 26 trailheads and four fully restored rail depots and closely follows the Missouri River between the towns of Machens, near St. Louis, and Clinton, close to Kansas City. Along its route, it passes by wineries, tracks the Lewis & Clark Trail, and tells the story of America's western history.
- The Katy is like the Georgia Hi-Lo in that it traverses many historic communities and tells a broader story of American history. It is also primarily rural.
- The Katy is different from the Georgia Hi-Lo in that it is managed by the state as a linear park and overwhelmingly relies on railroad right of way. It is not paved, nor is it planned to be, instead it uses crushed limestone.



*Borden Tunnel on Great Allegheny Passage.*

*Image source: Accessed via <https://gaptrail.org/before-you-go/how-to-prepare/>*

## DATA COLLECTION

Beginning in early March 2023, the PATH team gathered the data necessary to plan a regional trail across eight counties in east-central Georgia. PATH relied on the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail initiative, which had established relationships with key stakeholders in each county – crucial for undertaking a planning effort of this scope. These relationships opened the doors to the data necessary for trail study and alignment evaluations. Member counties and cities generously provided parcel lines, roads, floodplains, parks, schools, and the like, all in GIS format. From these datasets, the PATH team built a data-infused base map that formed the basis of cost estimates for the model projects in each county (discussed in detail in Chapter 3).

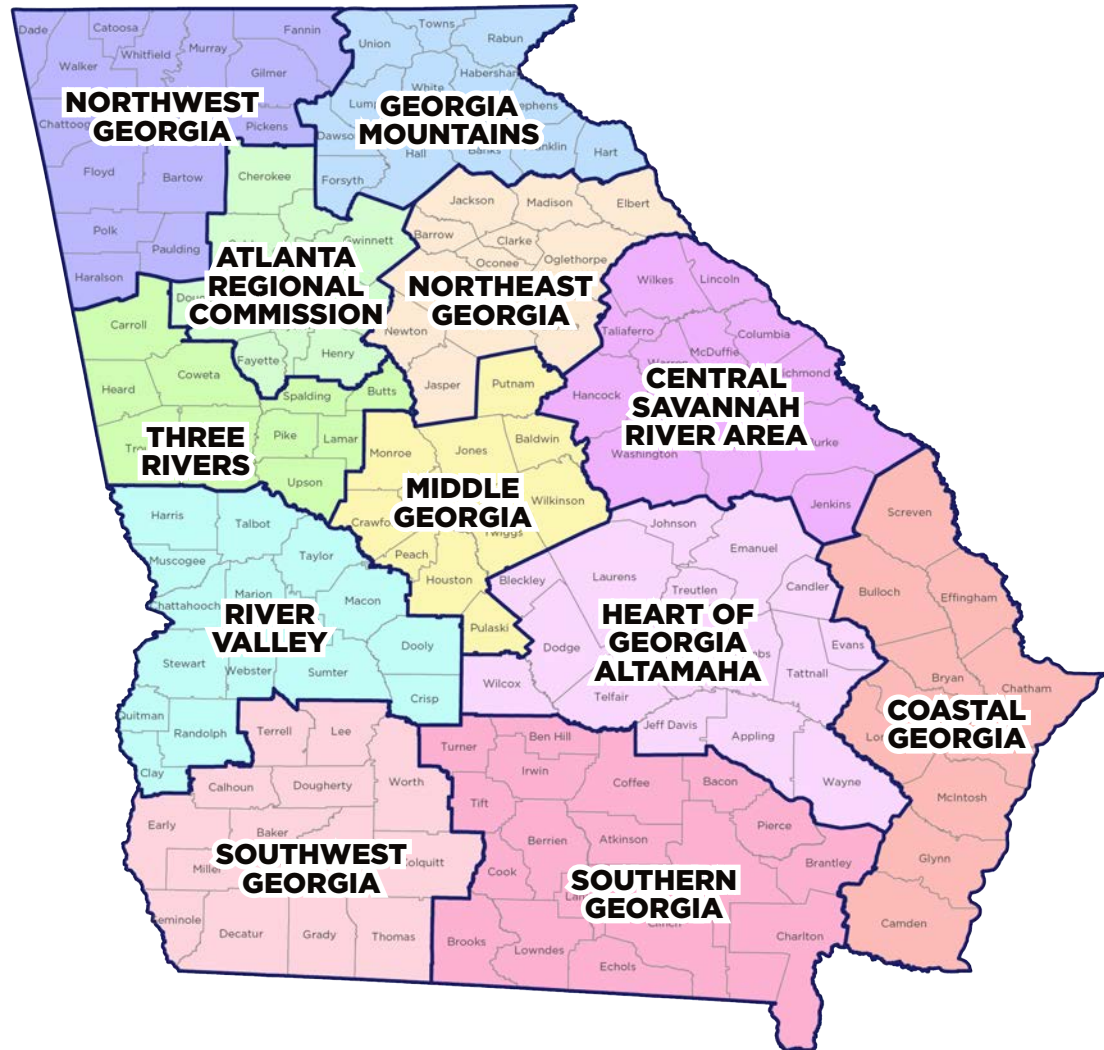
After a desktop analysis of the data, the PATH team conducted extensive field surveys to validate trail opportunities on the ground and in the communities. This entailed driving, bicycling, and hiking trips through each of the subject counties on multiple back roads, along dirt paths through wooded areas or adjacent to canals, and along long-unused railroad rights of way.

The PATH team also interviewed key staff and others with knowledge of county lands – these interviews typically involved staff from public works departments and/or county managers with knowledge not only of terrain but of individual property owners and their likely perspectives on the trail proposal. The Georgia Hi-Lo board members and allies in the various counties also provided indispensable information and perspectives gained from many years of bike riding events within and between the counties.

## REGIONAL AND STATE ENTITIES

The State of Georgia has several departments with jurisdiction over aspects of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail. The Department of Natural Resources oversees the state's parks and wildlife management areas. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) oversees the planning and maintenance of state roads. GDOT has a division for bicycle and pedestrian safety and planning. In addition to guiding, planning and engineering, GDOT has also identified and signed several cross-state trails leveraging state-owned highways (typically lower volume rural roads or roads with paved shoulders) for the benefit of long-range bicyclists. The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail parallels State Bike Route 35 "March to the Sea."

Georgia is divided into regional commissions that coordinate planning and the distribution of state and federal funds for transportation and parks projects. Regional commissions may also assist local governments in grant applications and offer advice on implementation. They are key partners in regional trail-building efforts. PATH and the Georgia Hi-Lo interviewed staff from the commissions and received valuable direction on the process and timing for grant submission and what past winning grantees had in common.



### **Northeast Georgia Regional Commission**

- Greene County

### **Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission**

- Hancock County
- Washington County

### **Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission**

- Johnson County
- Emanuel County

### **Coastal Georgia Regional Commission**

- Bulloch County
- Effingham County
- Chatham County



## WORKING GROUP FORMATION AND COORDINATION

The core of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Study is coordination between the many entities that have a say in local governance and whose support is necessary for any long-distance trail. A trail traversing eight counties, four regional commissions, and multiple political boundaries must coordinate effectively to survive. With coordination in mind, PATH invited participants to join working groups in each of the subject counties with members recommended by the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative and drawn from city and county leadership, city and county staff, key landowners, and other stakeholders. Seven counties actively participated in the planning process:

Hancock	Bulloch
Washington	Effingham
Johnson	Chatham
Emanuel	

PATH met with the working groups from each county on four separate occasions as described at a high level below. Multiple smaller groups or individual follow-up meetings were also conducted. Attendance for the primary meetings can be found in the Appendix.

## PROJECT KICKOFF

The project kicked off with a virtual meeting of all members of the working groups from each county on March 6, 2023. PATH led a presentation that introduced the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail concept and vision for its completion along with the next steps in the trail planning process, and a meeting schedule, and ended with a request for any requested and available data not previously provided.



*PATH staff working with Team Effingham during working group meeting #1.*

## WORKING GROUP MEETING #1

This in-person meeting was held at central locations in Hancock, Washington, Johnson, Emanuel, Bulloch, and Effingham counties over 5 days from Monday, May 15, to Friday, May 19, 2023. As a central meeting location could not be identified in time for an in-person meeting, the working group for Chatham County met virtually on June 2, 2023.

During meeting #1, PATH made presentations to attendees that focused on inspiring trail projects from around the country (detailed in the previous chapter), trail types (greenways, sidepaths, calm streets), and possible trail surface materials. PATH staff then introduced three main planning questions crucial to fitting trail planning into broader governmental initiatives to ensure support from the community:

- **What are the County's goals in relation to trails?**
- **Who are the primary targeted users of the trail?**
- **What are the key destinations in the County?**



*Team Effingham (top) and Team Hancock (bottom) participating in the planning exercises of Working Group Meeting #1.*

## WORKING GROUP MEETING #2

This virtual meeting was held via Zoom on June 21, 2023. PATH made a presentation focused on an analysis of the answers to the three planning questions given in meeting #1 as well as preliminary findings from field visits and data analysis. Key destinations discussed in meeting #1 were confirmed in this meeting. The “who for” question revealed important trail planning strategies and largely focused on “tourism for economic development” and “attracting and retaining young families.” An analysis combining all the counties’ responses yielded the word cloud below relevant to “county goals” – with the size and color of the font showing the popularity of individual themes common across the counties. Detailed responses to the planning questions for each county are available in the Appendix.

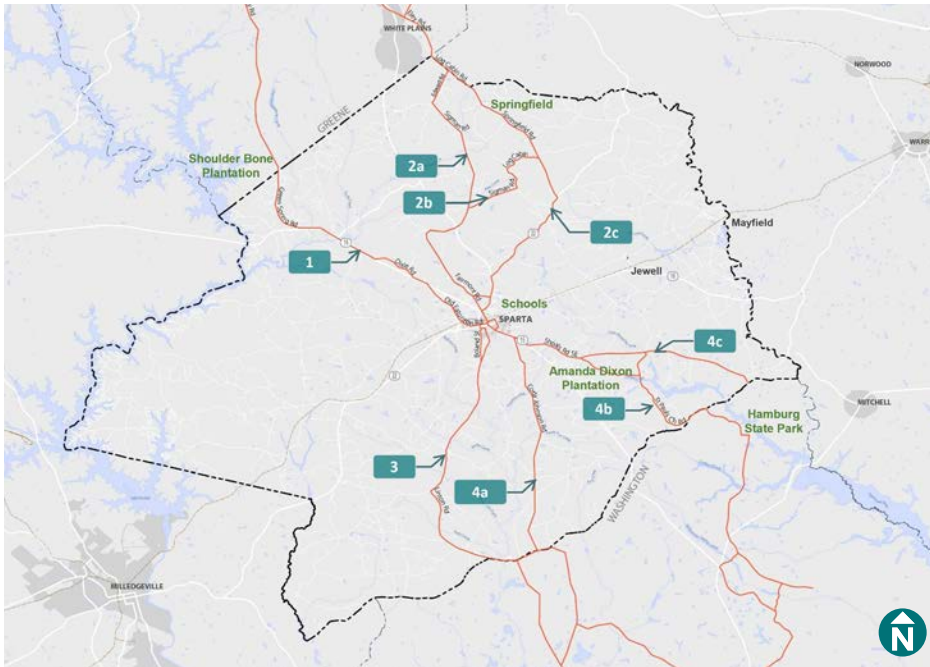


Word cloud of the most common phrases counties used to describe goals for the Georgia Hi-Lo.



### WORKING GROUP MEETING #3

Meeting #3 was held in person at central locations in each of the Hi-Lo counties over two weeks between Monday, July 10 and Friday, July 20, 2023. PATH made a presentation showing more detailed hypothetical alignments connecting to key destinations identified in the previous meeting and asking stakeholders for feedback. Each county was shown a PATH proposal for a model project within their county to provide residents an opportunity to see and experience a greenway trail. Each working group meeting #3 preceded the public meeting held in that particular county later on the same day. The agenda focused on providing government leaders and staff a chance to react to the hypothetical alignment and model project proposals and for local leaders and staff to direct PATH regarding the nuances of public engagement in their county.



*Sample hypothetical alignment map with key destinations identified by stakeholders in Hancock County.*

### WORKING GROUP MEETING #4 (MODEL PROJECT CONFIRMATION)

In each of the Hi-Lo counties, PATH conducted targeted virtual meetings to discuss the overall communication strategy and the proposed model projects. These meetings were held in August and September and some involved multiple follow-ups to answer questions or to speak with key stakeholders unable to attend the meeting. At this time, Georgia Hi-Lo and the county stakeholders generally agreed that it was best to not define county-wide hypothetical alignments with lines on maps in rural areas due to the high potential for public misunderstanding. The hypothetical alignments proposed by the PATH team are still available as the project progresses through the model phase and residents become more familiar with trails.

In lieu of an overall county alignment, the PATH team recommended that the focus be shifted to model projects. Based on input received during the working group meeting #4 and feedback in follow up meetings, the PATH team proposed model projects in each of the counties. These are described in detail in the following chapter.

### WORKING GROUP MEETING #5 (STUDY REPORT REVIEW AND FINAL REPORT SUBMISSION)

The PATH team submitted the draft plan for all subject county stakeholders to review during virtual meetings held with each of the subject counties individually during the week of November 13, 2023. The working group was given two weeks to review the document, the PATH team then adjusted the document based on feedback and submitted it to the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative Board and to the points of contact for each of the counties on h 12, 2023.

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

From July 10 to 20, 2023, the PATH team assisted by Georgia Hi-Lo staff conducted public engagement meetings at central locations in each of the Hi-Lo counties. These meetings had varying levels of turnout with the highest numbers recorded for Bulloch, Effingham, and Washington counties. During these meetings, the PATH team introduced the benefits of trails, trail types, and inspiring trails similar to Hi-Lo that had already been constructed around the state. Meeting attendees confirmed that the responses to the three planning questions (trails and county goals, target trail users, and key destinations) were reflective of the community desires.

These public meetings were announced via social media and promoted by local stakeholders in each of the Hi-Lo counties. The detailed trail alignment opportunities in each county were shared in an information package presented to county staff in each county and disseminated through their standard communication channels.



*Stakeholders in Tennille learning about the Hi-Lo Trail.*

## PUBLIC SURVEY

To assess the public's understanding and support for trails, the PATH team launched a survey that was open from July 10 through August 17 coinciding with the public meetings conducted in each county. The survey was promoted by each of the Hi-Lo counties through social media channels and was highlighted in public meetings with flyers containing the web address and a QR code for easy access. The questions asked in the survey are listed below and the results are available in the appendix:

- How many times have you been on a nature trail, bicycle trail, walking trail, or multi-use trail in the past year?
- If you have been on a trail in the last year, what did you like about it?
- If a trail were within 10 minutes of your home, how often would you use it?
- What destinations in your county would you like to get to on a trail?
- Are there children under 18 in your home who might use a trail?
- Do you care for a senior who might use a trail?
- Any other thoughts about trails you'd like to share?
- Can you tell us a bit about where you live?
- How long have you lived there?



## PUBLIC REACTIONS AND IMPACT ON OVERALL PLAN DESIGN

While some attendees expressed concerns about the trail, the majority expressed hope and optimism that the benefits of trails could be brought to their communities. Positive feedback included the opportunity to get kids out on bikes and seniors out walking in safe natural settings. Many of those giving positive feedback had experienced trails in other settings and had first-hand knowledge of the benefits.

Concerns were also raised about the impacts of the trail on private property and hunting grounds, and whether the local governments intended to use eminent domain to acquire land to build trails. The PATH team confirmed that no land would be used without the owner's written consent. While some attendees were disappointed that the potential trail alignments would come close to their property, others were disappointed

that the trail would not come close to theirs. There seemed to be some relationship between those who had previous experience with trails in other locations and support for bringing the trail into their communities and near their land.

As a result of the public meetings and the level of concern expressed by rural residents regarding the proximity of trails to their homes, the working group members agreed to remove hypothetical specific county-wide alignment references in future communications and focus instead on achievable model projects that could show county residents how the trail would be built and how it would function in their community.



*Carrolton GreenBelt at Ayers Dairy Farm.*







# **3 GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL ALIGNMENT STRATEGY**



# MODEL PROJECTS

The PATH Foundation, dedicated exclusively to planning, designing, and building trails for over 32 years, has developed an effective trail network strategy that focuses on the identification and delivery of model projects. Model projects are the first phase of a broader trail system and are designed to give the public at large a sense of what the trail will look like and how it will fit into a community.

The ideal model project is identified with the following criteria:

- Has the support of political leadership and community stakeholders;
- Connects trail users to their favorite local destinations – such as schools, parks, or entertainment areas;
- Is financially feasible;
- Is technically feasible;
- Requires easements from relatively few properties;
- Can be extended in either direction as part of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail vision;
- Can be accomplished quickly; and
- Covers a relatively short distance.

With these criteria in mind, the PATH Foundation collaborated with stakeholders and the public in each of the Hi-Lo counties to identify model projects. To introduce the model projects in each county, this chapter is broken into standalone sections – one for each county – that assess the county’s terrain, population, and economic condition as they relate to the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail and its component model projects. The model projects are then described in detail including an implementation plan with phasing, estimated costs, funding strategies, public engagement, and a high-level schedule. The cost estimates use relevant data from Fall 2023 from existing trail projects in rural Georgia including the recently completed phase of the Firefly Trail in Greene County.





# HANCOCK COUNTY

Hancock County lies between the Ogeechee River to the east and the Oconee River to the west. The rolling hills of the county are covered primarily by timber farms and dotted with small towns. The county has an interesting history; including substantial wealth generated by the plantation economy in the 1700s and the rise of self-sufficient rural African American communities (e.g., Springfield) after the abolition of slavery and the end of the Civil War. One of America's earliest black female millionaire's, Amanda America Dickson, owned a large and successful post-slavery plantation in the county's southeast in the late 1800s.

Hancock County's population stood at 8,735 in the 2020 US Census, a decline of 8% since 2010. It is majority minority with the largest racial/ethnic group being black or African American. It is also one of the five poorest counties in the state. The fascinating stories told by ever fewer local residents indicate that a cross-county trail could be an effective strategy to both help tell the county's story and buttress efforts at stabilizing the population and growing local businesses.

Key destinations that could help tell Hancock's story and where economic development would be helpful were identified in the early planning phase in coordination with stakeholders and the public. They include the Hancock County Public Schools in Sparta, historic downtown Sparta, the Hancock County



*Hancock County Courthouse in Sparta.*

Youth Center, and the Hancock County Park, which is currently in design and scheduled for construction in 2024-25 with an opening in late 2025 or early 2026.

The City of Sparta has an existing signed walking trail that connects visitors to local history with stops at historic retail structures, mansions, and the county

courthouse. The Georgia DOT is planning a project to divert Highway 15 through traffic, especially through truck traffic, on a bypass around the north and east side of Sparta.

Other destinations just outside the county that are important for county residents include the small historically significant town of Jewell and Hamburg State Park.

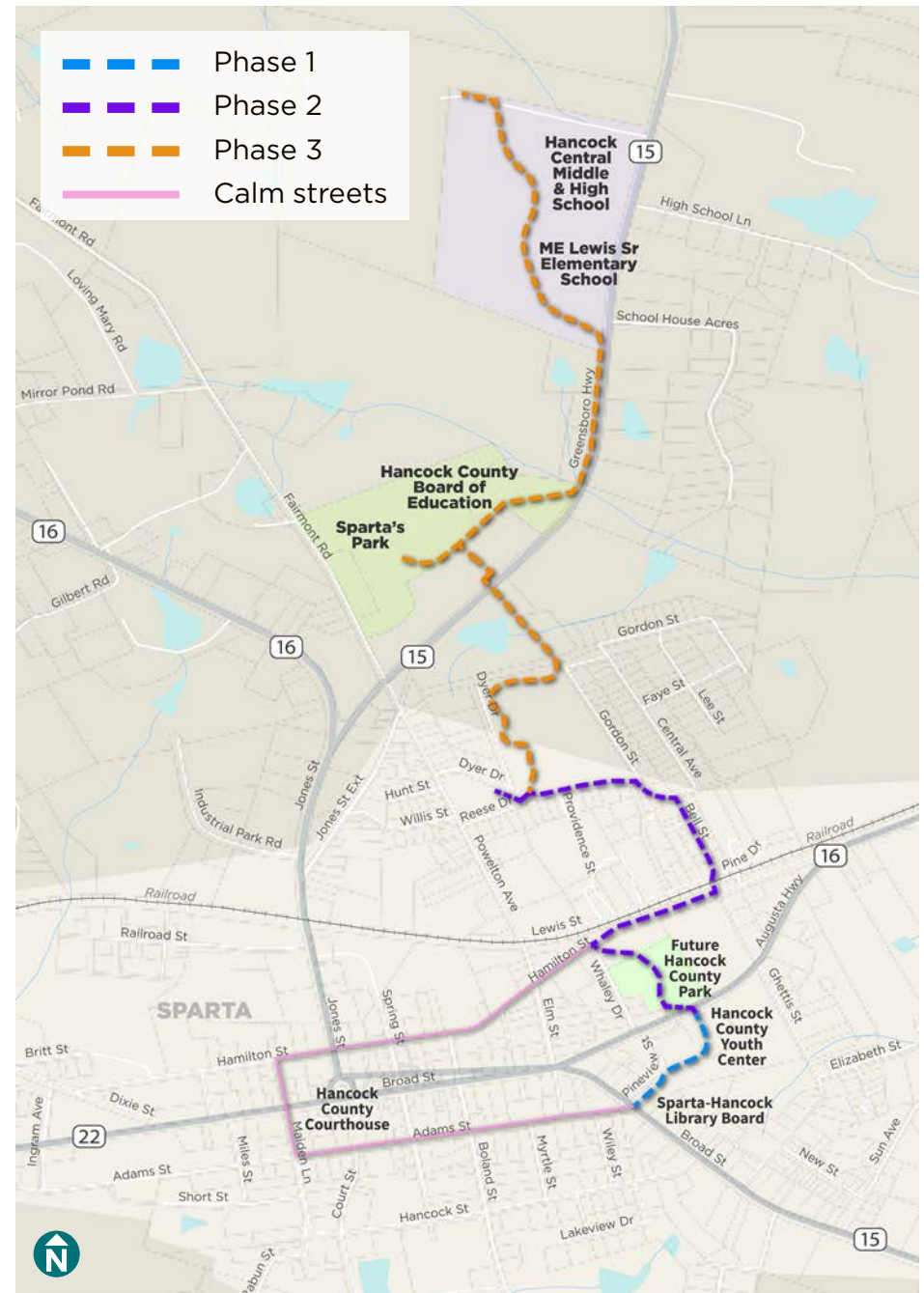


# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL HANCOCK COUNTY MODEL PROJECT

The model project identified by PATH staff in collaboration with key stakeholders and the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Initiative is an approximately 2.8-mile paved, multi-use trail that connects the historic neighborhood along Adams Street on the south side of town to Hancock County Public Schools beyond city limits on the north side of town. The proposed alignment connects the Hancock County Library, Hancock County Youth Center and administrative buildings, the new Hancock County Park, the Sparta Housing Authority, Sparta's recreation park, and Hancock County Elementary, Middle and High Schools. A number of these Sparta-specific destinations are included in the county-wide desired destinations identified by stakeholders and vetted by the public.

The 2.8-mile project is broken into three phases of varying lengths (0.3 miles, 0.9 miles, and 1.6 miles) to enable Hancock County leadership flexibility in grant applications and their corresponding match contribution requirements. With just a few exceptions, the entirety of the trail is on publicly owned land (e.g., school property) or in public right of way (e.g., alongside a public street or state highway).

The map to the right identifies the approximate project location and the three proposed construction phases. The location and character of the three phases is described below.



Hancock County Hi-Lo model project map.

## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL HANCOCK COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 1

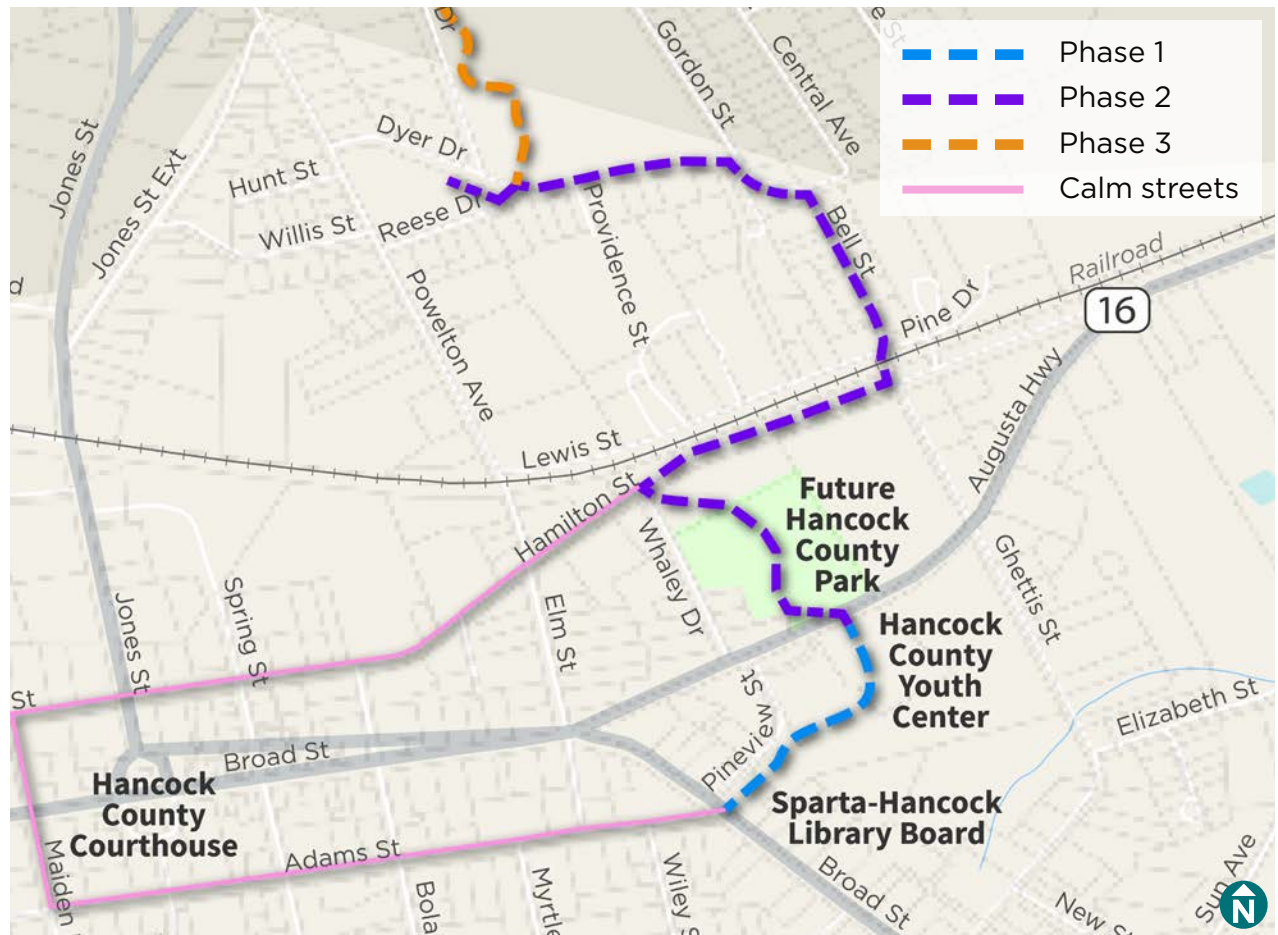
Phase 1 is a short 0.3-mile segment that would be relatively easy to build while still providing valuable connections for city residents. It begins where Adams Street and Broad Street intersect with a user-activated bicycle-pedestrian traffic signal designed to stop cars as users cross Broad Street. Currently Broad Street is managed by the Georgia DOT but in coming years, as the bypass around Sparta is built, this street will revert to city ownership. This change will simplify the permitting process and create more flexibility with the crossing design and associated infrastructure.

On the east side of Broad Street, the Phase 1 Trail follows the short segment of Pineview Street as a sidepath on the south side as it passes the Hancock County Library. It then follows an existing dirt road south through a forested area on Hancock Board of Education property (including an area that had once been a park and using the old road designed to provide access to it) before entering the Hancock County parcel containing the Youth Center and an administrative building (an old school where there are plans to resurrect an indoor basketball facility).

The Phase 1 Trail then crosses Hwy 16 (the “Augusta Highway”), with a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal to allow safe passage to the upcoming Hancock County Park, for which funding has been received, design and construction scheduled, and with a tentative opening date in late 2025 or early 2026.

The City of Sparta has an existing signed walking trail that connects visitors to local history with stops at historic retail structures, mansions, and the county courthouse. The Georgia DOT is planning a project to divert Highway 15 through traffic, especially through truck traffic, on a bypass around the north and east side of Sparta.

Other destinations just outside the county that are important for county residents include the small historically significant town of Jewell and Hamburg State Park.



Map of Hancock County model project Phase 1 Trail and Phase 2 Trail.



## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL HANCOCK COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2

Phase 2 is a 0.9-mile segment that continues the Phase 1 Trail into the planned Hancock County Park and beyond to the Sparta Housing Authority.

The new Hancock County Park is being designed by the design firm “Alta,” whose project manager indicated the park project could accommodate and potentially pay for a 10-12-foot-wide paved trail from the Augusta Highway entrance on the park’s south side to the proposed parking area on the park’s west side. The graphic to the right shows Alta’s draft park design with an overlay of a trail alignment proposed by PATH.<sup>1</sup>

At the northwest corner of the park, the Phase 2 Trail exits onto the street and becomes a sidepath (a narrow landscape buffer between trail and street) along Whaley Drive to a user-activated crossing signal at Hamilton Street. The sidepath along Whaley Drive will likely require an easement from the owner of 918 Hamilton Street.

On Hamilton Street, the Phase 2 Trail enters the city-owned parcel housing the old railroad depot as a greenway (well-separated from the street). This helps the City and its partners develop this property as both trail users and park users have safe and inviting access to it. At this location, the Hancock Hi-Lo Trail also intersects with the walking tour route of historic Sparta that continues west along Hamilton to Maiden Lane where it then crosses West Broad before looping back on Adams Street to the beginning of the Hancock Hi-Lo on East Broad Street.<sup>2</sup>

To the east of the old railroad depot, the trail crosses onto railroad-owned property. PATH recommends that the trail continue as a greenway, which requires an easement from the railroad. If an easement cannot be obtained, the alternative is to continue the trail as a sidepath along Hamilton Street to the intersection with Ghettis Street where it turns north. At this point, the trail uses a “calm street” strategy (bikes share



*Alta’s Hancock County Park design with PATH proposed Phase 2 Trail overlay.*

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that Georgia Hi-Lo and Hancock County staff will need to officially request the design change from Alta prior to the project being bid for construction.

<sup>2</sup> When complete, the model project Phase 1 and Phase 2 will create a loop that includes the historic walking tour as the western side of the loop and the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail as the eastern side of the loop.



the road with traffic, pedestrians use a sidewalk where available). The calm street trail along Ghettis Street crosses the railroad tracks at grade. The Hancock Hi-Lo implementation team will work with the Georgia DOT and the railroad owner on what, if any, crossing improvement funds are available to facilitate a smooth, wheelchair-friendly railroad crossing over this lightly used railway.

The Phase 2 Trail continues north of the railroad crossing as the road changes its name to Bell Street until the intersection with Dyer Drive. On the north side of Dyer Drive, the Phase 2 Trail enters the parcel owned by the Hancock Board of Education (BoE) that is the site of the former high school. Depending on direction provided by the BoE, the trail either becomes a sidepath on the edge of the parcel or a greenway deeper into the parcel. The greenway opportunity on this large parcel is thought of as a linear arboretum that serves both aesthetic needs for a beautiful, shaded trail and education needs to describe to students of all ages the trees native to Hancock County.

The trail continues across the BoE property with a spur to Reese Drive where it crosses Dyer Drive to the Sparta Housing Authority property with a user-activated pedestrian signal for a safe crossing. When complete, Phase 1 and Phase 2 provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access between the housing authority, the new county park, the youth center, and the library.

## HANCOCK COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2 - HAMILTON STREET VISION GRAPHIC



Top left: Existing condition of the intersection of E Hamilton Street and Whaley Drive.

Top right: Context map for photo location.

Bottom: Vision graphic for proposed trail crossing over E Hamilton Street.

## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL HANCOCK COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 3

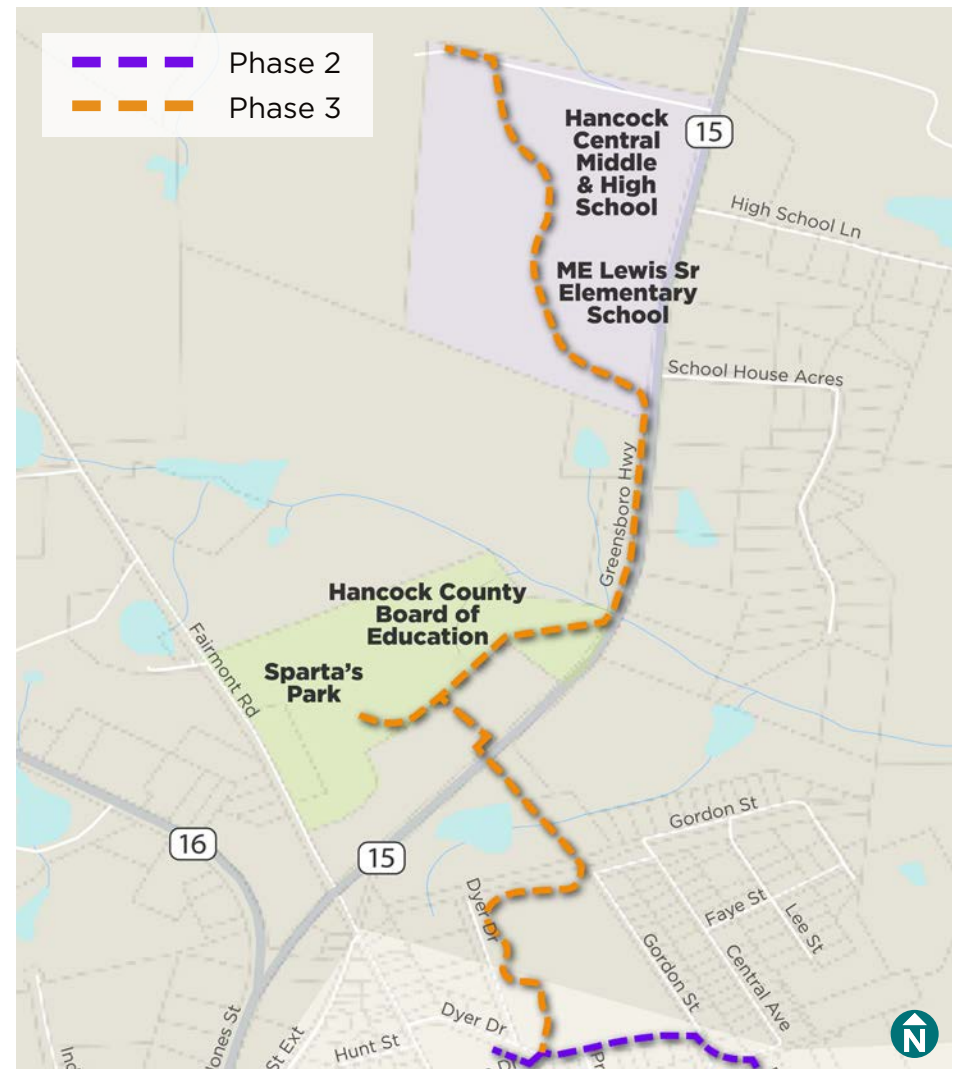
Phase 3 picks up where Phase 2 ends near the Reese Drive spur. As with the last segment of Phase 2, this first segment of Phase 3 through BoE property could operate as either a sidepath on the edge of the parcel or a greenway deeper into the same parcel. The design of the greenway would accommodate an extension of the linear arboretum as the trail meanders northward.

On the back (north) side of the BoE parcel housing the old high school, the Phase 3 Trail crosses a paper street (“Gordon Street”), likely controlled by the City of Sparta, which is currently a power line easement. On the north side of the paper street, the Phase 3 Trail enters a residential parcel (requiring an easement) that parallels another power line. Proceeding further north, the trail enters the parcel owned by Oglethorpe Power that houses a substation. The PATH Foundation has worked with power companies in similar settings in the past and generally finds that the trail design must accommodate power company assets and be a certain distance and potentially include security fencing. These details will be resolved in the design phase.

Once across the privately-owned parcels, the Phase 3 Trail is back on public right of way on Georgia Highway 15 where it crosses with a user-activated pedestrian signal onto another BoE parcel that houses the Board of Education offices. The trail skirts the western edge of this property as a sidepath with a 5-foot landscape buffer to be constructed in conjunction with a project to create a vehicular entrance to the City of Sparta’s recreation park from Highway 15.

A key destination for the Phase 3 Trail is the City of Sparta’s recreation park, which is envisioned to have expanded facilities enabling the city to host youth sports tournaments. The trail enters the park from the south as a sidepath leading to the parking area in a way that flexibly accommodates the park’s future redesign. The trail continues in an arc to the east and back to Highway 15 where it becomes a sidepath along the west side of the highway for approximately 1,300 feet.

At the back entrance to the M.E. Lewis Elementary School, the Phase 3 Trail is a greenway that hugs the forest line west of the driveway before passing the tennis courts and crossing the driveway entrances to the Hancock High School and Hancock Central Middle School parking areas where it terminates at a bicycle parking facility.



Map of Hancock County model project Phase 3 Trail.

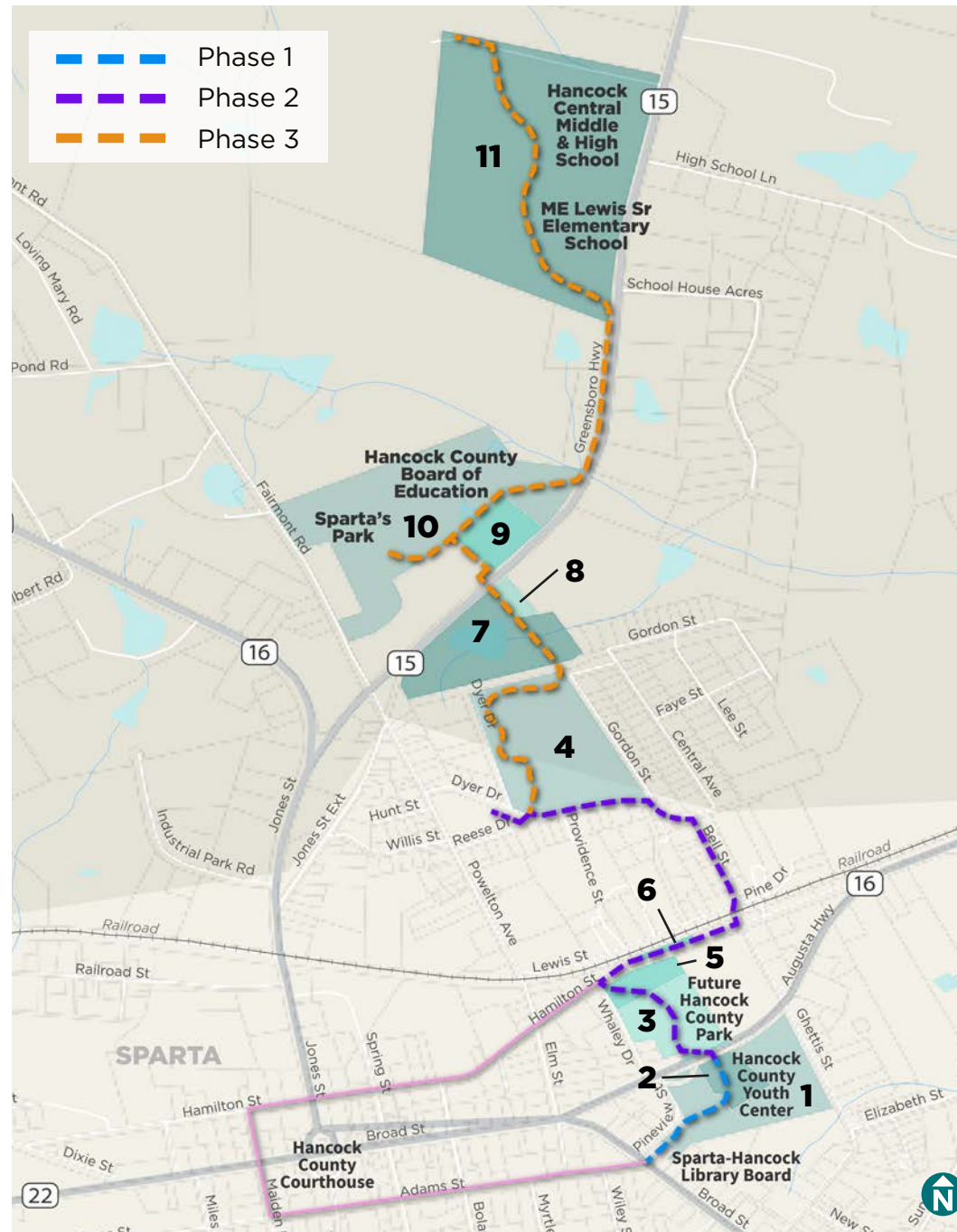
## MODEL PROJECT – PARCEL INFORMATION

The information provided below is offered in draft format at the planning level. No decisions have been made and no aspect of the project will move forward without the full consent of the subject property owners. Under no circumstances does the county envision using eminent domain to acquire easements. Property owners who grant access for the public to use a trail are shielded from liability by Georgia law.<sup>1</sup> Further details regarding precise alignments and required easements will be determined in the design phase of the project.

Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
1	1	Public	12480 Augusta Hwy	S008 071	Hancock Board of Education
2	1	Public	NA	S008 025	Hancock County
3	2	Public	NA	S007 043	Hancock County
4	2	Public	201 Dyer Dr	S006 091	Hancock Board of Education
5	2	Private	918 Hamilton St	S007 044	Earnest and Elnora Carswell
6	2	Corporate	961 Hamilton St	S007 031	GA RR
7	3	Private	10472 Hwy 15	142B 043	Anthony Benson
8	3	Corporate	10540 Hwy 15	142B 044	Oglethorpe Power Corp
9	3	Public	10571 Hwy 15	142B 042	Hancock Board of Education
10	3	Public	96 Fairmont Rd	141 025	Hancock County Work Camp
11	3	Public	11311 Hwy 15	141 029	Hancock Board of Education

<sup>1</sup> See [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf](https://chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf)





Hancock County parcels potentially impacted by the Hancock County Hi-Lo Trail Model Project.

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL HANCOCK MODEL PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

The charts below summarize the preliminary cost estimates for the model project phases identified in the previous section. PATH recommends updating this cost estimate at every design interval to accommodate the change in cost over time. These cost estimates come with the following considerations:

- The cost for building a soft surface trail as an intermediate step towards full-length paving is offered as an alternative that lowers initial costs and enables more miles of trail to be brought on line sooner. Concrete is the strongly recommended long-term design solution both for access for people with disabilities and for substantially lower ongoing maintenance costs.
- The construction cost for the trail within the future Hancock County Park and the mid-block crossing at Augusta Hwy is not included in this cost estimate.
- The costs for public right-of-way, easement and property acquisition are not included.<sup>1</sup>
- Estimated P&E (Planning and Engineering) costs include surveying, design, and engineering for construction, permitting, bidding, and construction administration of the project.
- Estimated Construction Costs for a 10-foot wide trail are based on material and labor pricing from Fall 2023 using the trail design standards recommended in Chapter 4.
- Capital costs for lighting and security camera systems are not included.
- Trail maintenance operating costs are not included.

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Concrete)	Total Cost
1	0.3	\$114,000	\$577,000	\$691,000
2	0.7	\$143,000	\$780,000	\$923,000
3	1.6	\$192,000	\$1,918,000	\$2,110,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>\$449,000</b>	<b>\$3,275,000</b>	<b>\$3,724,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of construction with in one stage..*

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Gravel)	Total First Stage Cost	Marginal Cost of Second Stage Concrete	Long Run Final Cost
Phase 1	0.3	\$114,000	-	-	-	-
Phase 2	0.7	\$143,000	\$470,000	\$613,000	\$658,000	\$1,271,000
Phase 3	1.6	\$192,000	\$1,438,000	\$1,630,000	\$1,194,000	\$2,824,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>\$449,000</b>	<b>\$3,062,000</b>	<b>\$3,625,000</b>	<b>\$1,852,000</b>	<b>\$4,095,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of alternative construction construction method with intermediate soft surface trail..*

<sup>1</sup> PATH recommends that the Implementation Committee assess acquisition cost several months prior to the beginning of construction of each trail segment.



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL HANCOCK COUNTY MODEL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is an ambitious undertaking to build at least 211 miles of paved multi-use trails from Athens to Savannah and beyond. This trail planning effort has introduced the Hancock County community to the trail concepts and has generated some initial momentum that will need to be harnessed to bring the three-phase model project (and thus the rest of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail) to life.

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FORMATION

PATH recommends that the stakeholders who have helped shape the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail vision into a plan in Hancock County now stay on as founding members of the implementation team. Their first step will be to draw other committee members from the ranks of county staff, community leaders, outdoors people, and others to oversee the design and the construction of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Hancock County Model Project.

## FUNDING STRATEGY

The PATH team recommends that Hancock County develop a multi-year grant strategy including back-up plans for those times when grant applications are not successful. Well-thought-out local funding and grant strategies are highly attractive to philanthropic donors. They form the basis of a successful public-private partnership that can be leveraged to maintain momentum and keep the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Hancock Model Project on track until all 2.8 miles are completed and Hancock County residents can start to experience the benefits of trails.

## LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Some examples of local funding include:

- City/County budget allocations for parks, transportation, or sewer and water
- Bond referenda
- Sales surtax funds
- Hotel-Motel taxes
- Development impact fees
- In-kind products and services
- Philanthropic grants
- Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST)

## STATE OF GEORGIA FUNDING SOURCES

- Some examples of state funding include:
- Special project allocation
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)
- DNR Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

## DONATIONS

Foundations and generous individuals are often supportive of trail infrastructure especially if the benefits to the community are clearly spelled out. Additionally, fundraisers engaging smaller donors can yield substantial money to invest in design and engineering and eventually construction.

## FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prioritizes and distributes federal transportation funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program
- Federal Transit Administration Capital Funds (FTA)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program) (TA)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Safe Routes to School
- Safe Streets and Roads for All

## HIGH-LEVEL SCHEDULE

The PATH Foundation recommends that the 2.8 mile, three-phase model project in and around Sparta be completed within seven years as broken down below:

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Building County-wide Support							
Phase 1: Design & Permit							
Phase 1: Construction							
Phase 2: Design & Permit							
Phase 2: Construction							
Phase 3: Design & Permit							
Phase 3: Construction							

To ensure progress while understanding that staff time is a finite resource, PATH recommends that as the first phase of the model project shifts out of design and into construction, the next phase immediately goes into design. This reduces the lag time between completion of the first phase and completion of subsequent phases while promoting an efficient division of labor and limiting the impact on staff workloads.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

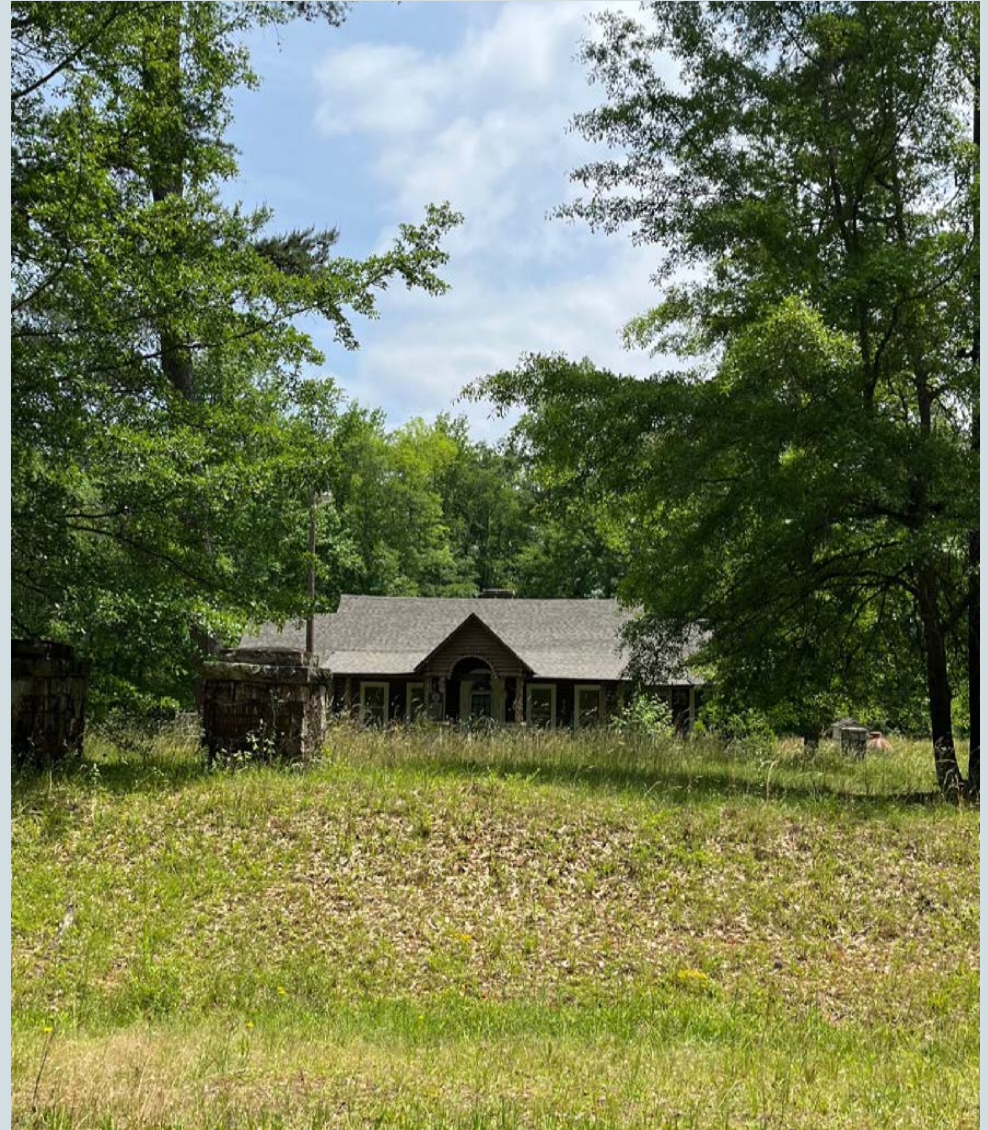
To maintain momentum and public enthusiasm for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail's Hancock model project, it is crucial to keep the public informed of the design and construction progress. PATH recommends that local leaders follow a communications schedule with four touch points with the public regarding the model project:

1. At the public meeting for adoption of the Georgia Hi-Lo Plan (and model project) by the Hancock County Board of Commissioners;
2. At a public meeting to gather feedback on the 30% design of the model project;
3. At a public meeting to show how the feedback impacted the 100% design of the model project; and
4. At a public meeting to share the construction schedule and any traffic impacts.

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL HANCOCK COUNTY LOOK AHEAD

When the last phase of the model project proceeds into design, the implementation team should begin planning for the extension of the Georgia Hi-Lo as the next step to completing a county-wide trail alignment. County leaders should engage key rural property owners with in-depth discussions with the goal of finding a cross-county alignment that would be acceptable to county residents.

Future destinations of the Georgia Hi-Lo trail in Hancock County, both northern connections to Greene County and eastern and southern connections to Hamburg State Park, will be planned with the support of county and local leadership and vetted with the community. PATH recommends that the historic sites in Springfield and the beautiful countryside in northern Hancock County be considered as key destinations. Springfield was a community developed by formerly enslaved people that thrived in the late 1800s and into the 1950s. It consisted of a number of well-constructed structures – churches, homes, and a social center. Springfield tells the story that many visitors want to hear about – how Georgia’s black population pulled itself out of slavery and degradation into self-sufficiency and success. Another key destination that should be considered is Jewel, a late 19th century transportation hub with Ogeechee River access and a trail-supportive community.



*Historic Springfield Community Center.*



# WASHINGTON COUNTY

Washington County lies between the Ogeechee River to the east and the Oconee River to the west and is directly southeast of Hancock County. The northwestern side of the county consists of rolling hills covered largely by timber forests. The Hamburg State Park is located here with its large pond, gracious camping facilities, and a native deciduous tree canopy. Sited nearby are interesting historic destinations like Warthen, home of Georgia's oldest jail, where Aaron Burr was incarcerated for treason in 1807 (but later acquitted).

The southeastern side of the county has fewer hills, sandier soils, and also has large tracts of timber. Kaolin mining is a major industry in the county and Sandersville is the headquarters of Thiele Kaolin Company, which owns one of the largest kaolin processing facilities in the world. Kaolin is a layered silicate mineral that is little known, but essential to modern society as a critical ingredient to ceramics, medicine, coated papers, toothpaste, cosmetics, and lighting.<sup>1</sup>



*Georgia's Oldest Jail in Warthen.*

Washington County's population stood at 19,988 in the 2020 US Census, a decline of 6% since 2010. It is majority minority with the largest racial/ethnic group being black or African American. As with neighboring Hancock County, the diminishing population and the fascinating stories indicate that a cross-county trail linking to both local and regional destinations could be an effective strategy for population stabilization and economic development.

Key destinations that tell Washington County's story were identified early in the Georgia Hi-Lo planning phase in coordination with stakeholders and the public. They include the Washington County Public Schools and Brentwood private school in Sandersville, historic downtown Sandersville, the Brown House, Forest Grove Preserve, historic railroad infrastructure, the historic water tower, and downtown Tennille. The small towns of Warthen and Jewell and Hamburg State Park were also popular with stakeholders and the public.

The Georgia DOT is planning to build a bypass around Tennille and Sandersville that is hoped to reduce the negative impacts of through truck traffic. Georgia DOT is also working with the City of Tennille on a project to streamline the Norfolk Southern railroad operations in its downtown area by closing some railroad crossings and creating a pedestrian bridge over the tracks to connect the two disconnected components of downtown, which have recently seen investment and the opening of new businesses.



*Mural in Sandersville in Washington County.*

<sup>1</sup> See this website for more information on kaolin <https://www.imerys.com/minerals/kaolin#:~:text=Kaolin%2C%20or%20'china%20clay',particle%20shape%2C%20and%20chemical%20inertness.shape%2C%20and%20chemical%20inertness>.

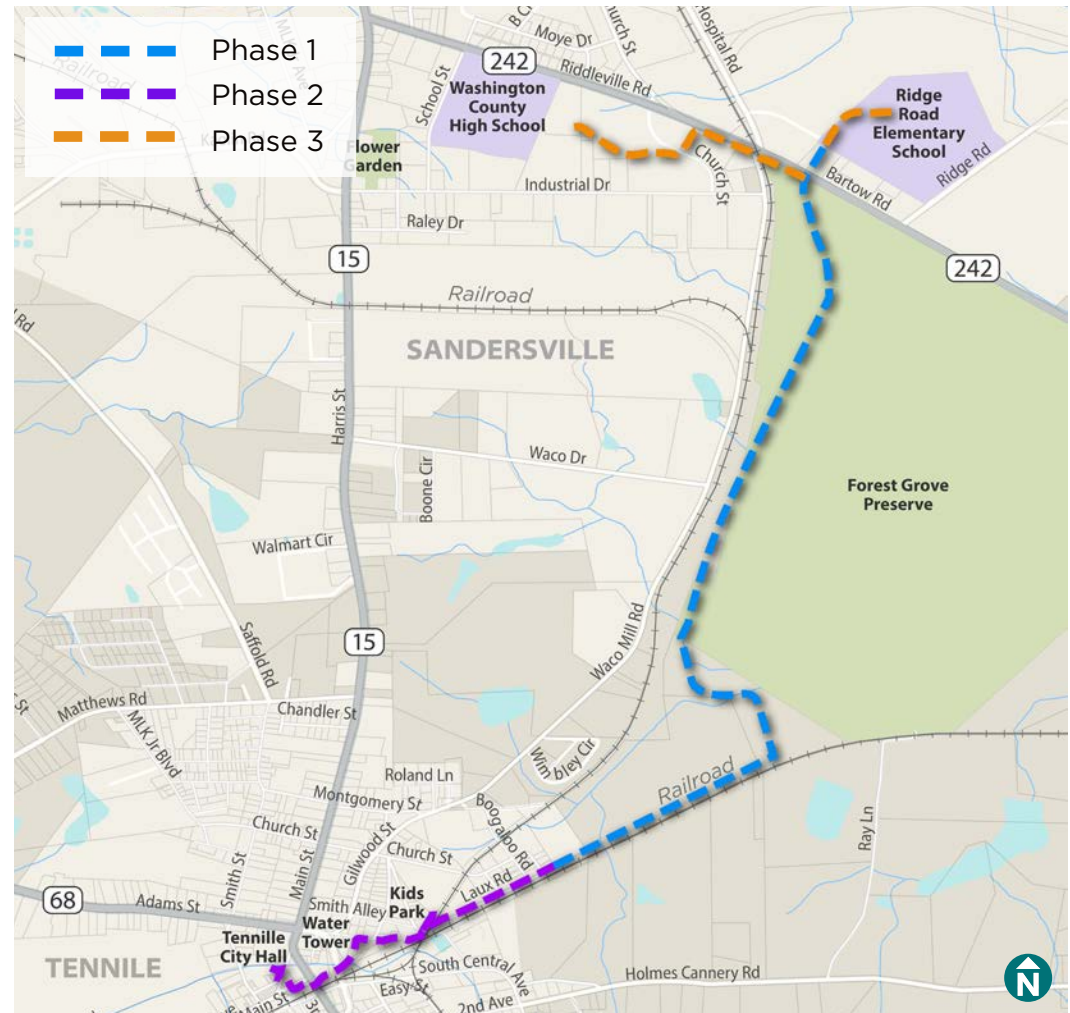
# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL WASHINGTON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT

The model project identified by PATH staff in collaboration with key county stakeholders and the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Initiative is an approximately 3.7-mile paved, multi-use trail that connects Washington County High School, Ridge Road Elementary School, the Forest Grove Preserve, the Sparta Housing Authority, the Tennille Water Tower Park, and downtown Tennille with its children's park and small businesses. A number of these local destinations are included in the county-wide desired destinations identified by stakeholders and vetted by the public.

The project is broken into three phases to enable Washington County leadership flexibility in grant applications and their corresponding match contribution requirements.

The model project trail alignment relies on the acquisition of private easements that are contemplated to generally follow existing power lines and/or skirt the edges of parcels.

The map on the right identifies the approximate model project location and the three potential construction phases.



Washington County Hi-Lo model project map.



## GEORGIA HI-LO WASHINGTON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 1

Phase 1 is a 2.2-mile segment built primarily on an easement generously donated by the Forest Grove Preserve. Forest Grove Preserve is a registered Georgia Centennial Farm and is also on the National Register of Historic Places. It was created by an heir to the original plantation owner to manage the historic property, provide for recreational opportunities, and curate a unique mid-20th century art collection.<sup>1</sup>

From the north, the Phase 1 Trail begins in the city of Sandersville at Ridge Road Elementary School, skirts the edge of school property and crosses Davis Giddens Drive with a user-activated pedestrian crossing traffic signal. It then traverses the edge of a parcel owned by a timber farming entity before crossing Georgia Highway 242 (Riddleville Road) with another user-activated traffic signal before entering Forest Grove Preserve.

Within the Forest Grove Preserve for more than 1 mile, the Phase 1 Trail threads through a wooded area between the Sandersville Railroad to the west and the power line easement to the east. At the southern end of the Preserve, the trail crosses onto a private parcel requiring an easement. Initial conversations with this owner have been positive and it is hoped an easement will be granted. The trail then crosses onto Norfolk-Southern Railroad right of way and runs adjacent to the active railway for approximately 1,800 feet before terminating on Laux Road at the entrance to the property containing a cell phone tower. Initial discussions indicate a good possibility that the Railroad would approve this easement.



*Power line in Forest Grove Preserve.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://forestgrovepreserve.org/>

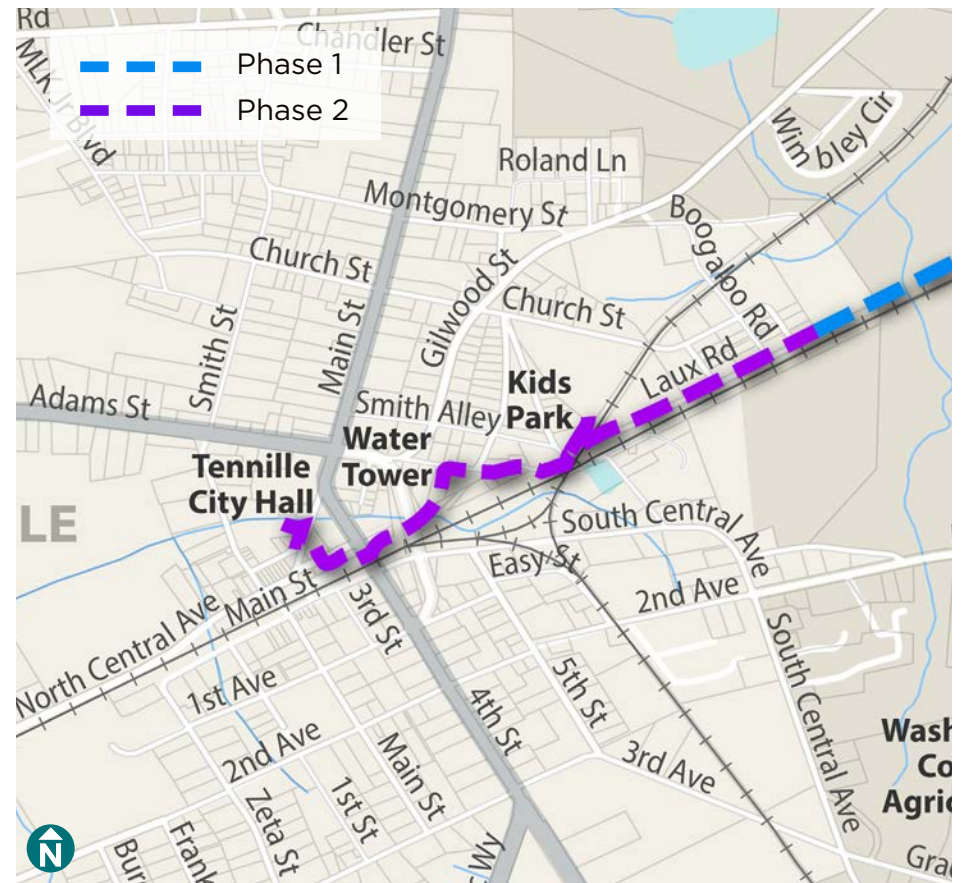


## GEORGIA HI-LO WASHINGTON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2

Phase 2 extends southwest from the terminus of the Phase 1 Trail on Laux Road. Currently, the City of Tennille maintains Laux Road to provide access to four residential parcels. This land may not be public right of way but has been used as such for many years. If Norfolk-Southern agrees, the Phase 2 Trail uses Laux Road as a “calm street” trail (shared drivers/bikers/walkers) and crosses the single-track railroad (where the Sandersville Railroad splits from Norfolk-Southern Railroad’s main line) at ChaLaux Road where a short spur provides access to the Tennille Housing Authority property. After crossing the single track, the trail becomes a sidepath requiring an easement from a single-family parcel fronting the railroad before proceeding west along Adams Street, crossing a railroad spur at White Line Street. At this point, the trail enters the City of Tennille’s old water tower parcel, which is slated to become a park. The trail is a greenway primarily using the city parcel but likely requiring easements from one or two privately owned parcel fragments between the water tower and the railroad.

With Norfolk-Southern Railroad’s permission, the Phase 2 Trail passes along railroad right of way beneath the Tennille Railroad Overpass with a trail alignment between the bridge abutment and its first supporting structure on the north side of the railroad. The City of Tennille, in collaboration with the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative, has received a grant to assist with planning and engineering this somewhat complicated section of the trail in consideration of the impact of railroad operations on the quality of life of residents of Tennille. This is a time-bound grant and preliminary discussions offer hope that Norfolk-Southern Railroad will support the application by granting an easement or a lease of land for trail building purposes.

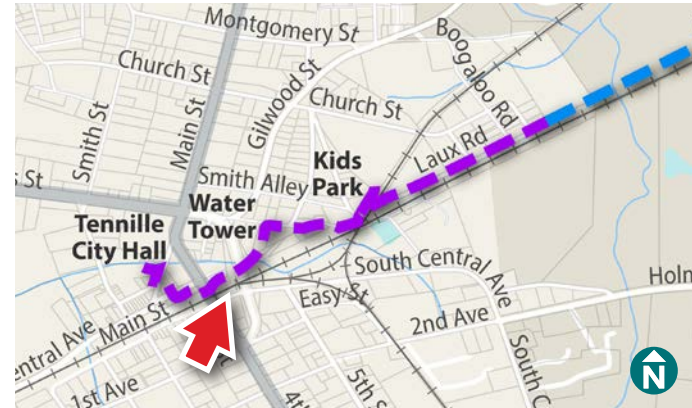
The Phase 2 Trail continues on the north side of the railroad right of way until it crosses Fourth Street with a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal, where it becomes a sidepath on the north side of Main Street. At a convenient mid-block location, the trail crosses a privately owned parcel home to Pepe’s Bar and Grill, crosses West North Central Avenue with a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal, enters City of Tennille owned property south of the police department, and then has a safe crossing of N. Main Street near City Hall where the Washington County Model Project Phase 2 terminates at the City of Tennille’s children’s park.



Map of Washington County model project Phase 2 Trail.



## WASHINGTON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2 ADAMS STREET UNDERPASS



Top left: Existing condition of the rail line parallel to Main Street in Tennille.

Top right: Context map for photo location.

Bottom: Vision graphic for the proposed trail paralleling the existing NorfolkSouthern rail line.

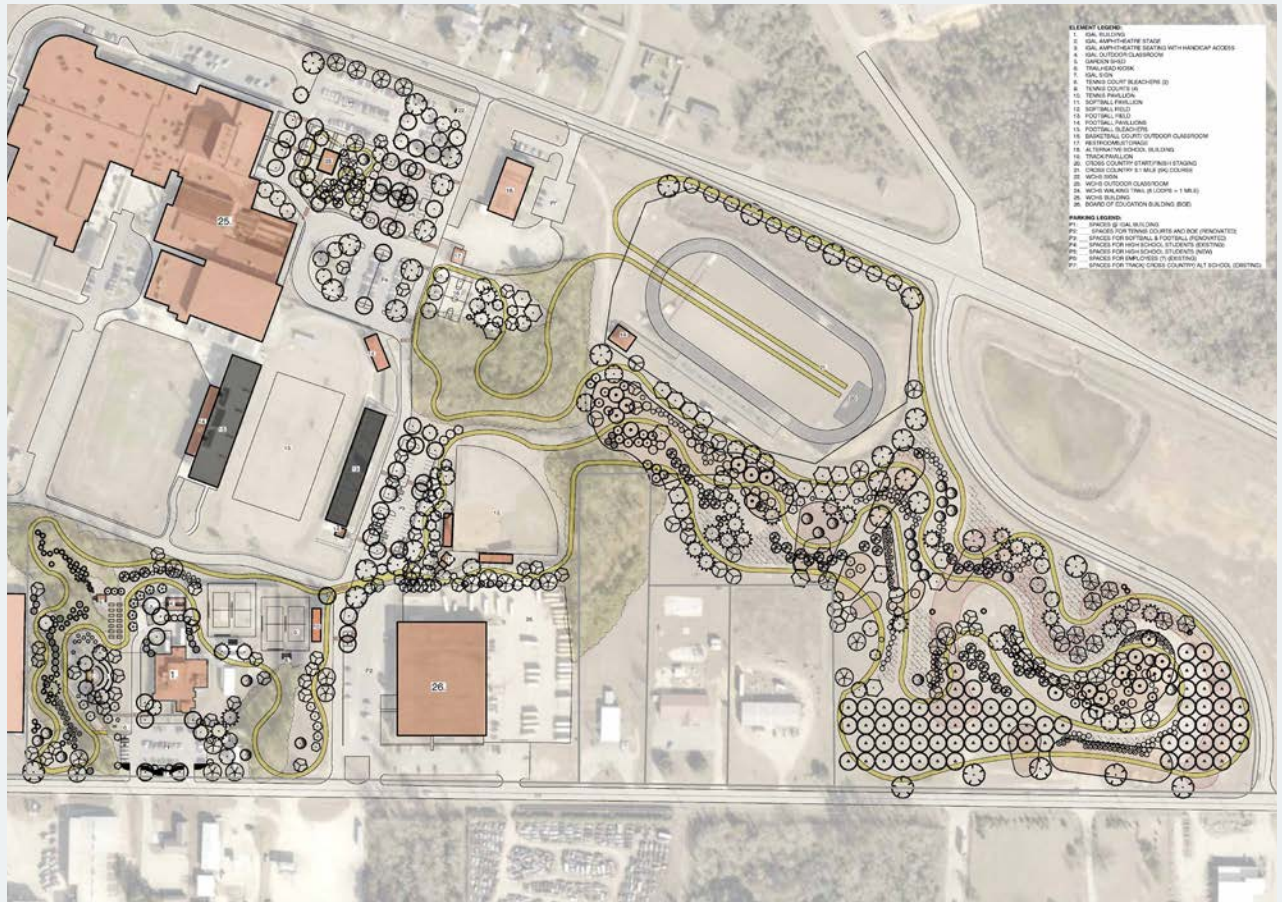


## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL WASHINGTON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 3

Phase 3 is a 0.8-mile trail north of the Phase 1 Trail separated into two distinct segments, both of which interact with Washington County Board of Education (BoE) properties. The first segment extends west from the northern portion of the Phase 1 Trail as a greenway spur on Forest Grove Preserve property that proceeds to the railroad/motor vehicle roundabout where it becomes a sidepath curving south along Waco Mill Road for approximately 300 feet before crossing midblock at a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal.

On the west side of Waco Mill Road, the sidepath trail returns north to the railroad/motor vehicle roundabout where it turns west as a sidepath along the south side of Riddleville Road.<sup>1</sup> It proceeds west for approximately 750 feet before crossing the BoE parcel diagonally to the southwest as a greenway before crossing Church Street at mid-block with a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal. On the west side of Church Street, the greenway interacts with the proposed Washington County Arboretum – an educational and recreational amenity. On the west side of the arboretum, the Phase 3 Trail arcs to the north of the ballfield before terminating at the drive aisle entrance to Washington County High School's eastern façade.

The second distinct segment of the Phase 3 Trail extends the Phase 1 Trail for approximately 800 feet from its terminus at Davis Giddens Drive onto Washington County BoE property at the Ridge Road Elementary School, creating a new trailhead on school property for the benefit of the children.



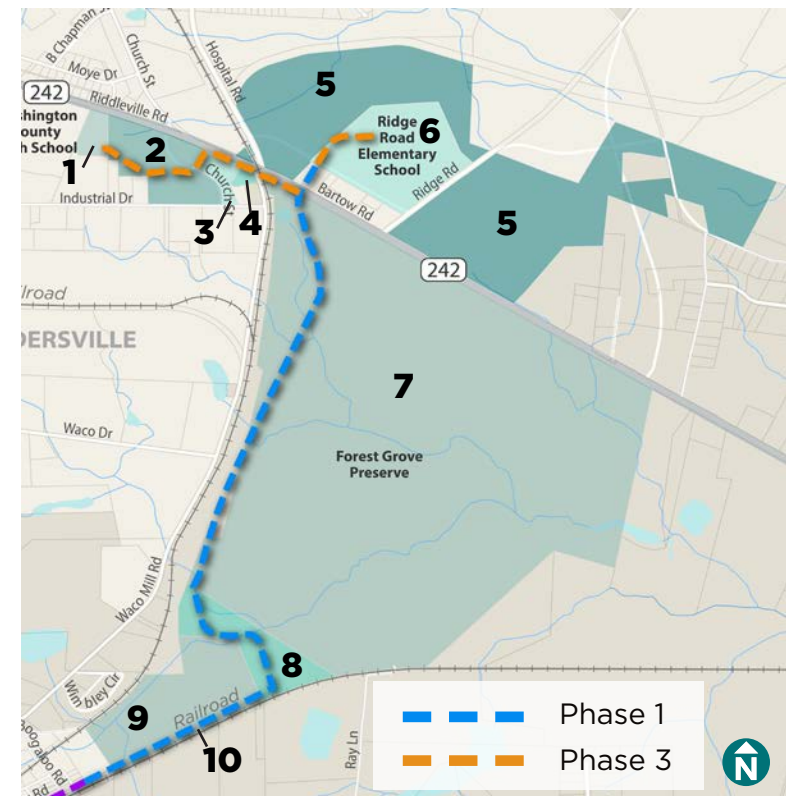
Proposal for Washington High School Arboretum by Field Study South, Inc.

1 To minimize the likelihood that trail users will simply cross at the shortest point, PATH recommends installing barriers to keep pedestrians and bicyclists out of harm's way.

## MODEL PROJECT – PARCEL INFORMATION

The information provided below is offered in draft format at the planning level. No decisions have been made and no aspect of the project will move forward without the full consent of the subject property owners. Under no circumstances does the county envision using eminent domain to acquire easements. Property owners who grant access for the public to use a trail are shielded from liability by Georgia law.<sup>2</sup> Further details regarding precise alignments and required easements will be determined in the design phase of the project.

Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
1	3	Public	Riddleville Rd	095 038E	Washington County BoE
2	3	Public	Industrial Dr	095 038	Washington County BoE
3	3	Private	Industrial Dr	095 038I	AB Helton Properties, LLC
4	3	Private	734 Riddleville Rd	095 039	Alan B Helton
5	3	Private	734 Riddleville Rd	095 039	HMT Timberlands LLC
6	3	Public	285 Ridge Rd	111 020A	Washington County BoE
7	1	Private	1200 Hwy 242	111 026	Lyle Lansdell
8	1	Private	958 Hwy 242	111 026A	Lyle Lansdell
9	1	Private	Laux Rd	112 001	Benjamin Tarbutton
10	1	Private	NA	NA	Norfolk Southern

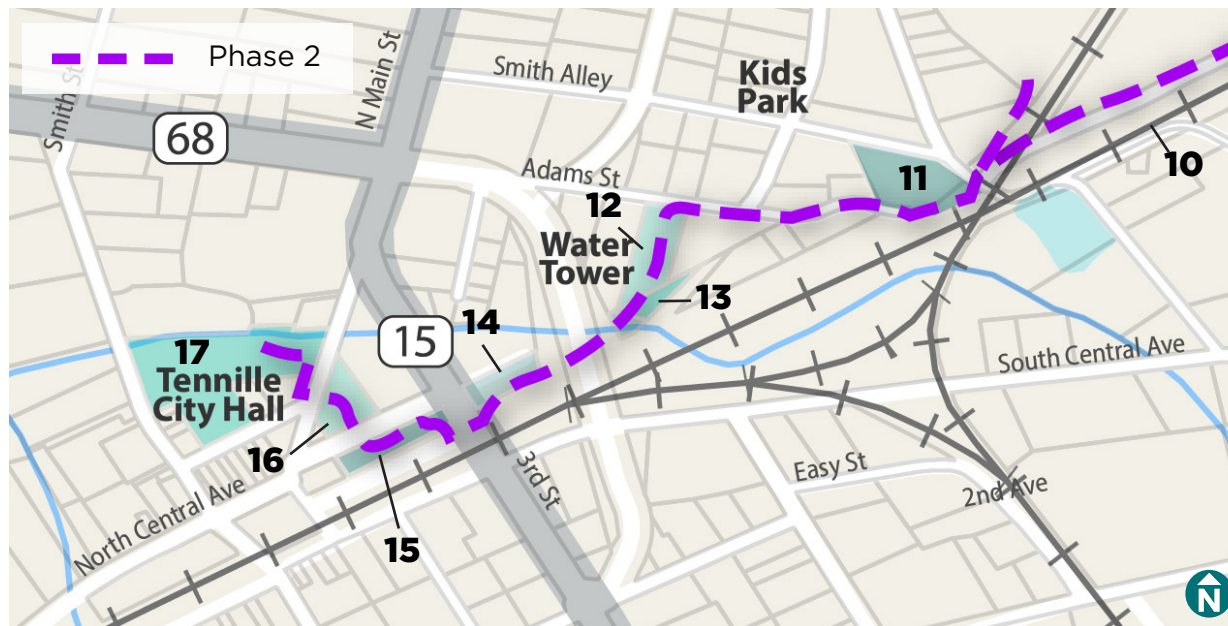


Washington County parcels potentially impacted by Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Model Project

<sup>2</sup> See [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf](https://chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf)



Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
10	2	Private	NA	NA	Norfolk Southern
11	2	Private	E. Adams St	T08 092	Jarvis and Maylonda Fleming
12	2	Public	E. Adams St	T08 085	City of Tennille
13	2	Private	E. North Central Ave	T008 087	Victory Central Church
14	2	Private	95 S. Fourth St	T08 035	325 Technologies, LLC
15	2	Private	106 E. North Central Ave	T09 012	Jose and Maricela Cruz
16	2	Public	112 N. Main St	T08 032	City of Tennille
17	2	Public	108 Park St	T08 022	City of Tennille



*Washington County parcels potentially impacted by the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Model Project.*

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL WASHINGTON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

The charts below summarize the preliminary cost estimates for the model project phases identified in the previous section. The PATH Foundation recommends updating this cost estimate at every design interval to accommodate the change in cost over time. The cost estimates below come with the following considerations:

- The cost for building a soft surface trail as an intermediate step towards full-length paving is offered as an alternative that lowers initial costs and enables more miles of trail to be brought on line sooner. Concrete is the strongly recommended long-term design solution both for access for people with disabilities and for substantially lower ongoing maintenance costs.
- The costs for public right-of-way, easement and property acquisition are not included.<sup>1</sup>
- Estimated P&E (Planning and Engineering) costs include surveying, design, and engineering for construction, permitting, bidding, and construction administration of the project.
- Estimated Construction Costs for a 10-foot wide trail are based on material and labor pricing from Fall 2023 using the trail design standards recommended in Chapter 4..
- Costs for lighting and security camera systems are not included.
- Trail maintenance operating costs are not included.

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Concrete)	Total Cost
1	2.3	\$378,000	\$4,488,000	\$4,866,000
2	0.8	\$190,000	\$1,035,000	\$1,225,000
3	0.8	\$171,000	\$919,000	\$919,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>\$739,000</b>	<b>\$6,442,000</b>	<b>\$7,010,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of construction with in one stage.*

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Gravel)	Total First Stage Cost	Marginal Cost of Second Stage Concrete	Long Run Final Cost
1	2.3	\$378,000	\$3,651,000	\$4,029,000	\$1,203,000	\$5,232,000
2	0.8	\$190,000	\$740,000	\$930,000	\$599,000	\$1,529,000
3	0.8	\$171,000	\$696,000	\$867,000	\$515,000	\$1,382,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>\$739,000</b>	<b>\$5,087,000</b>	<b>\$5,826,000</b>	<b>\$2,317,000</b>	<b>\$8,143,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of alternative construction construction method with intermediate soft surface trail.*

<sup>1</sup> PATH recommends that the Implementation Committee assess acquisition cost several months prior to the beginning of construction of each trail segment.



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL WASHINGTON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is an ambitious undertaking to build at least 211 miles of paved multi-use trails from Athens to Savannah and beyond. This trail planning effort has introduced the Washington County community to the trail concepts and has generated some initial momentum that will need to be harnessed to bring the three-phase model project (and thus the rest of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail) to life.

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FORMATION

PATH recommends that the stakeholders who have helped shape the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail vision in Washington County into a plan now stay on as founding members of the implementation team. Their first step will be to draw other committee members from the ranks of county staff, community leaders, outdoors people, and others to oversee the design and the construction of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Washington County Model Project.

## FUNDING STRATEGY

The PATH team recommends that Washington County develop a multi-year grant strategy including back-up plans for those times when grant applications are not successful. Well-thought-out local funding and grant strategies are highly attractive to philanthropic donors. They form the basis of a successful public-private partnership that can be leveraged to maintain momentum and keep the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Washington County Model Project on track until all 3.7 miles are completed and Washington County residents can start to experience the benefits of trails.

## LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Some examples of local funding include:

- City/County budget allocations for parks, transportation, or sewer and water
- Bond referenda
- Sales surtax funds
- Hotel-Motel taxes
- Development impact fees
- In-kind products and services
- Philanthropic grants
- Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST)

## STATE OF GEORGIA FUNDING SOURCES

- Some examples of state funding include:
- Special project allocation
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)
- DNR Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

## DONATIONS

Foundations and generous individuals are often supportive of trail infrastructure especially if the benefits to the community are clearly spelled out. Additionally, fundraisers engaging smaller donors can yield substantial money to invest in design and engineering and eventually construction.

## FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prioritizes and distributes federal transportation funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program
- Federal Transit Administration Capital Funds (FTA)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program) (TA)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Safe Routes to School
- Safe Streets and Roads for All

## HIGH-LEVEL SCHEDULE

The PATH Foundation recommends that the 3.7-mile, three-phase model project between Sandersville and Tennille be completed within seven years as broken down below:

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Building County-wide Support							
Phase 1: Design & Permit							
Phase 1: Construction							
Phase 2: Design & Permit							
Phase 2: Construction							
Phase 3: Design & Permit							
Phase 3: Construction							

To ensure progress while understanding that staff time is a finite resource, PATH recommends that as the first phase of the model project shifts out of design and into construction, the next phase immediately goes into design. This reduces the lag time between completion of the first phase and completion of subsequent phases while promoting an efficient division of labor and limiting the impact on staff workloads.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

To maintain momentum and public enthusiasm for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail's Washington model project, it is crucial to keep the public informed of the design and construction progress. PATH recommends that local leaders follow a communications schedule with four touch points with the public regarding the model project:

1. At the public meeting for adoption of the Georgia Hi-Lo Plan (and model project) by the Washington County Board of Commissioners;
2. At a public meeting to gather feedback on the 30% design of the model project;
3. At a public meeting to show how the feedback impacted the 100% design of the model project; and
4. At a public meeting to share the construction schedule and any traffic impacts.



## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL WASHINGTON COUNTY LOOK AHEAD

When the last phase of the model project proceeds into design, the implementation team should begin planning for the extension of the Georgia Hi-Lo as the next step to completing a county-wide trail alignment. County leaders should engage key rural property owners with in-depth discussions with the goal of finding a cross-county alignment that would be acceptable to county residents.

Future destinations of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail in Washington County will be planned with the support of county and local leadership and vetted with the community.

PATH recommends working with Norfolk-Southern to develop an opportunity for a rail trail connecting Tennille to Wrightsville on the former W&T ('W' for Wrightsville and 'T' for Tennille) Railroad alignment. Connecting the two towns along the unused rail right of way would be transformational for both counties and could be the key to success of the overall Georgia Hi-Lo Trail in this part of the state.

PATH also recommends that Hamburg State Park and the beautiful countryside in northern Washington County – including the historic town of Warthen – be considered as key destinations. The state park is relatively lightly used, and a trail could not only bring more visitors to the park, but it could also act as a welcome overnight location for long-distance trail users on multi-day explorations of east central Georgia.



*Hamburg State Park is a key Hi-Lo destination in Washington County.*

# JOHNSON COUNTY

Johnson County lies almost entirely within the Altamaha River basin with the Ochoopee River draining its west side and the Little Ochoopee River draining its east side. The gently rolling hills of the county are covered primarily by farms producing timber, peanuts, and cotton.<sup>1</sup>

Johnson County's population stood at 9,189 in the 2020 US Census, a decline of 8% since 2010. Herschel Walker, famous running back and Heisman Trophy winner from the University of Georgia, is a prominent native son. The town of Wrightsville is home to the Johnson State Prison, a leading employer. With a diminishing population but a largely intact historical district, the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail offers a unique opportunity to stabilize the population, attract and retain the next generation of residents, grow local businesses, and attract business investment.



*Historic Grice Hotel in Wrightsville, Georgia.*

*By Jud McCranie Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=71756708>*

Key destinations that could help tell Johnson County's story and where economic development would be helpful were identified in the planning phase in coordination with stakeholders and the public. Key destinations include the Johnson County Public Schools in Wrightsville, the Grice House (a former hotel that would make an excellent guest house), the Wrightsville Depot, the Johnson County Park, and historic Kite.

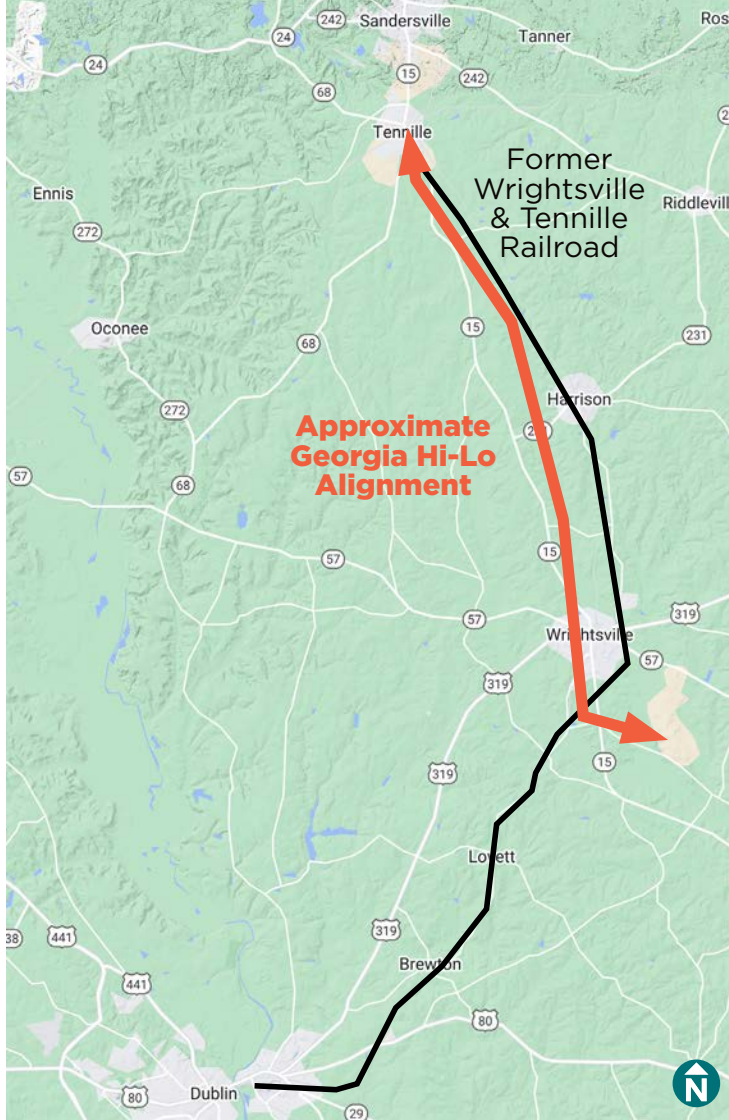
The former Wrightsville and Tennille Railroad (nicknamed the "W&T" or, more affectionately, the "Wiggle and Twist") is an unused rail line that begins in downtown Tennille in Washington County (at a junction with and active Norfolk-Southern Railroad line). It passes through the center of Wrightsville just east of downtown before proceeding south along Idlywild Drive towards Laurens County and eventually to the city of East Dublin. While not in use for a number of years as evidenced by the trees growing in the tracks along most of the alignment, this rail line is not abandoned, and the right of way is still owned by Norfolk-Southern (N-S). However, N-S regional representatives informed Johnson County leadership that there were no plans for active rail use for the foreseeable future.

This unused rail line, however, has potential for economic development in east central Georgia as a greenway rail-to-trail alignment. The approximately 16-mile alignment from downtown Tennille to downtown Wrightsville passes through the small charming town of Harrison, bucolic pecan farms and woodland areas, and at least one farmstead set up to be a bed-and-breakfast accommodation.<sup>2</sup> The railroad bed is overgrown and the bridges fording the small streams would have to be inspected, but the existing infrastructure, if the rails were to be removed, makes for an excellent trail.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online\\_Resources/Count](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online_Resources/Count)

<sup>2</sup> [https://lavendercountryhouse.com/y\\_Profiles/Georgia/cp13167.pdf](https://lavendercountryhouse.com/y_Profiles/Georgia/cp13167.pdf)





*W&T railroad alignment in Johnson County.*

PATH recommends that Georgia Hi-Lo, in collaboration with the Georgia DOT, Johnson County, and Washington County leadership, begin discussions with N-S property group to determine the feasibility of a long-term lease of the rail corridor. While the long-term vision of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail does not include an alignment in Laurens County (to Dublin, a regional commercial hub), should N-S be willing consider a lease from Tennille to East Dublin, PATH recommends pursuing this alignment.

At the request of several citizens interested in a cross-county trail, PATH staff explored the feasibility of following the power line that runs across the center of Johnson County west to east from Wrightsville to Kite. The easement parallels Georgia Highway 57 and seems to provide a direct and pleasant trail connection between Johnson County's primary towns. PATH determined that this power line is not owned by the power company, but instead relies on easements across more than 30 privately owned parcels between the two towns.<sup>3</sup> The land under these easements is often already used for agriculture and private recreation like hunting and is not perceived to be a feasible alternative for a multi-use trail.



*Former W&T alignment in Johnson County.*

<sup>3</sup> Source = qpublic.net



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL JOHNSON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT

The model project identified by PATH staff in collaboration with key county stakeholders and the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Initiative is an approximately 2.8-mile, two-phase, paved, multi-use trail that provides connections to and between the Johnson County Park, the Railroad Depot and downtown Wrightsville, and Johnson Middle/High School and Elementary School. A number of these local destinations are included in the county-wide desired destinations identified by stakeholders and vetted by the public.

The spine of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Johnson County Model Project is the W&T railroad alignment owned by Norfolk-Southern Railroad. The design for this model project depends on the generosity, community spirit, and business case for Norfolk-Southern to lease this property for the purpose of building a publicly accessible trail.



Johnson County Hi-Lo model project map.



## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL JOHNSON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 1

Phase 1 is a 1.9-mile trail that follows the W&T railroad right of way as it enters Wrightsville from the north. This trail would require the agreement of Norfolk-Southern Railroad to repurpose a portion of the unused right of way as a trail. This plan assumes that Norfolk-Southern could be persuaded to work with the City of Wrightsville on such a project.

The Phase 1 Trail begins as a calm street trail (no infrastructure, shared-use facility) on Lakeside Drive at Myrtle Street – providing a safe connection for city residents who live west of Georgia Highway 15 to the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail east of the highway. A pedestrian activated traffic signal shepherds trail users across the intersection of East Elk Street, Lakeside Drive, and North Marcus Street (Hwy 15) along undeveloped East Lake Street as a calm street trail. Upon reaching railroad right of way, the trail turns south and becomes a greenway following the unused railroad right of way through central Wrightsville making safe street crossings at Trilby Street, Court Street, Elm Street and College Street – with user-activated pedestrian traffic signals at each crossing.

South of College Street, the trail passes the Wrightsville Depot, a key destination that presents a valuable development opportunity enhanced by proximity to the trail. From the depot, the Phase 1 Trail continues as a greenway to the southwest along the railroad right of way with user-activated pedestrian traffic signals to cross Valley Street, South Marcus Street, and South Myrtle Avenue.

Prior to another user-activated pedestrian traffic signal at the intersection of Washington Avenue, the Phase 2 Trail

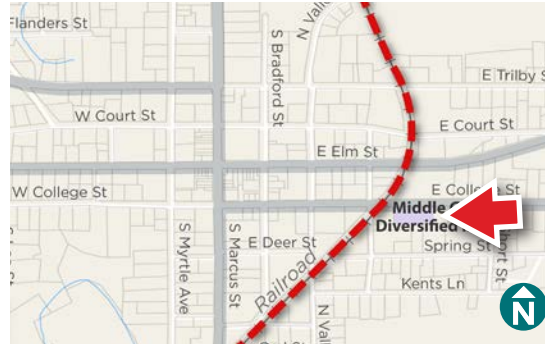
(described below) spurs off as a sidepath to the northwest, while the Phase 1 Trail continues southwest as a greenway along the rail alignment, crossing Oglethorpe Street with a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal, and proceeding to Lakeview Drive where it turns east and becomes a sidepath for the short distance to the intersection with Idylwild Drive. The trail then crosses Idylwild Drive at the north leg of the intersection and proceeds up the east side of Idylwild Drive as a sidepath before entering into the Johnson County Park – the terminus for the Phase 1 Trail. An easement may be required for a short distance along the east side of Idylwild Drive prior to entering the park.



*Railline adjacent to W&T trail train depot.*



## JOHNSON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 1 TRAIL DEPOT



Top left: Existing condition of former W&T train depot in Wrightsville.

Top right: Context map for photo location.

Bottom: Vision graphic for the proposed trail.





## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL JOHNSON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2

Phase 2 is a 0.9-mile spur off of the Phase 1 Trail that begins as a sidepath along the north side of Washington Avenue where a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal enables safe crossing of Georgia Avenue. To the west, the existing sidewalk is reconfigured as a multi-use trail, likely requiring a modification of the existing sidewalk easement from the single-family parcel owners. The sidepath follows the curve in the road and stays on the east side of what is now Lee Street along the Board of Education (BoE) parcel until just south of the BoE Annex driveways. At this point, the Phase 2 Trail crosses with a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal to the west side of Lee Street where it repurposes an existing sidewalk into a sidepath, crosses Milton Drive and again enters BoE property as a sidepath along Lee Street.

At the north side of the BoE operated bus facility, the trail shifts from a sidepath to a greenway and heads west across the BoE parcels in front of the Johnson County High/Middle school. Just to the east of the intersection with Chadwick Drive, the trail crosses Herschel Walker Drive at a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal and runs north along the east side of Herschel Walker Drive, likely requiring an easement. Once past the athletic field, the trail re-crosses Herschel Walker Drive and proceeds as a sidepath on the west side until the intersection with Highway 319 (West Elm Street), which has a sidewalk running along the south side of the street providing safe access to adjacent neighborhoods. The trail must make two crossings of Herschel Walker Drive because there is not enough space between the bleacher structure and the west side of the road for a trail



*Former W&T alignment in Johnson County.*

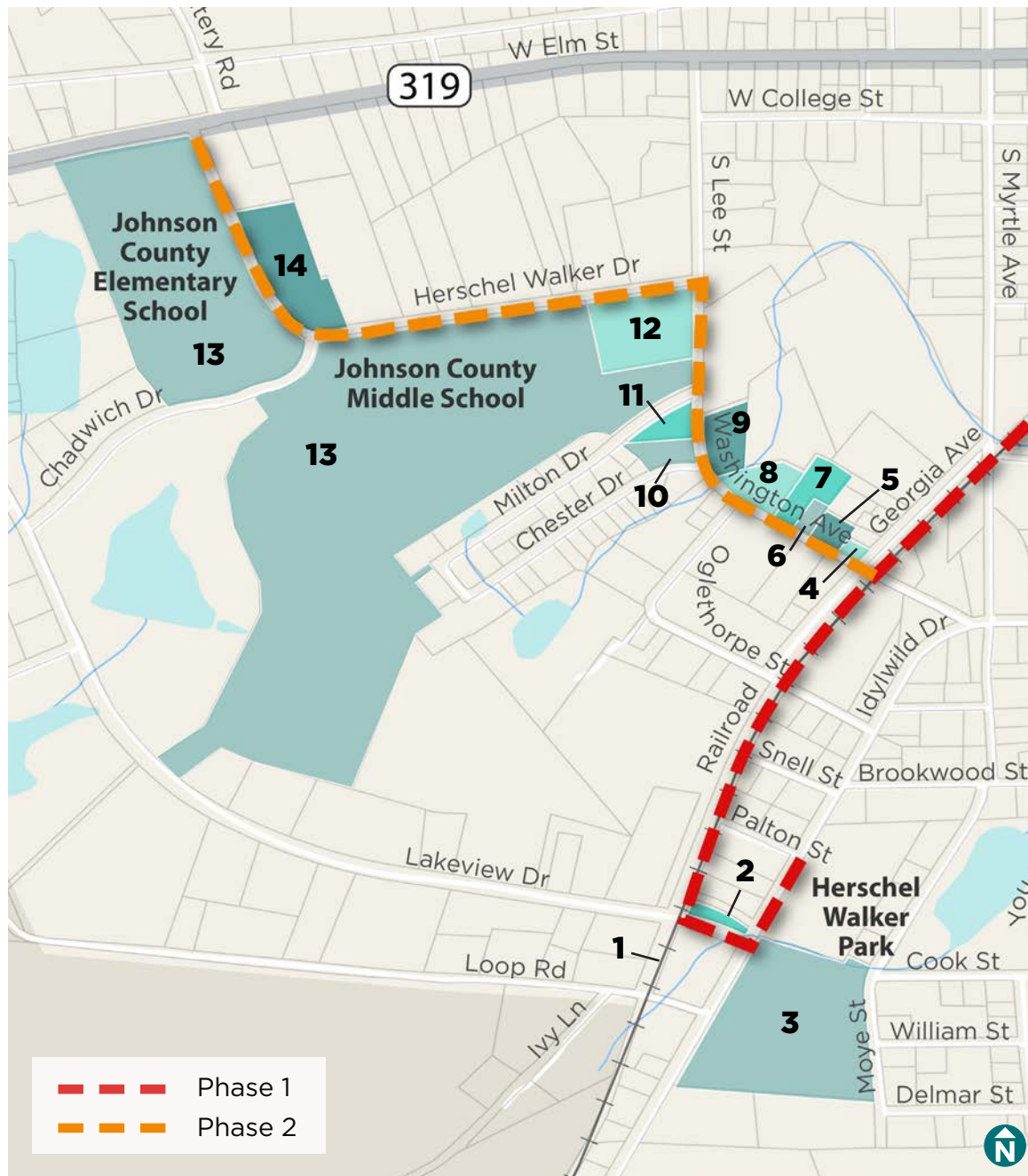


## MODEL PROJECT – PARCEL INFORMATION

The information provided below is offered in draft format at the planning level. No decisions have been made and no aspect of the project will move forward without the full consent of the subject property owners. Under no circumstances does the county envision using eminent domain to acquire easements. Property owners who grant access for the public to use a trail are shielded from liability by Georgia law. Further details regarding precise alignments and required easements will be determined in the design phase of the project.

Phase	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
1	1	Railroad	N/A	N/A	Norfolk-Southern
2	1	Private	2771 Idylwild Dr	W13 015	Danny Logue
3	1	Private	Box 391, Idylwild Dr	W13 013	Hazel Oliver
4	2	Private	60 Washington Ave	W1 032	Thomas and Angela Romer
5	2	Private	68 Washington Ave	W12 028	Thomas and Angela Romer
6	2	Private	412 Washington Ave	W12 027	Dawn Bailey
7	2	Private	416 Washington Ave	W11 016	Bailey-Hussey Dawn
8	2	Private	96 Washington Ave	W11 017	J & J Sumner, LLC
9	2	Public	162 Lee St	W11 029	Johnson County BoE
10	2	Private	147 Lee St	W11 012	Wynn Residential Services
11	2	Private	139 Lee St	W11 011	Wynn Residential Services
12	2	Public	290 Trojan Way	W11 002	Johnson County BoE
13	2	Public	102 Trojan Way	W04 022	Johnson County BoE
14	2	Private	135 Trojan Way	W05 012	Hillcrest Baptist Church

1 See <chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnbpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf>



Johnson County parcels potentially impacted by the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Model Project.



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL JOHNSON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

The charts below summarize the preliminary cost estimates for the model project phases identified in the previous section. PATH recommends updating this cost estimate at every design interval to accommodate the change in cost over time. These cost estimates come with the following considerations:

- The cost for building a soft surface trail as an intermediate step towards full-length paving is offered as an alternative that lowers initial costs and enables more miles of trail to be brought on line sooner. Concrete is the strongly recommended long-term design solution both for access for people with disabilities and for substantially lower ongoing maintenance costs.
- The costs for public right-of-way, easement and property acquisition are not included.<sup>1</sup>
- Estimated P&E (Planning and Engineering) costs include surveying, design, and engineering for construction, permitting, bidding, and construction administration of the project.
- Estimated Construction Costs for a 10-foot wide trail are based on material and labor pricing from Fall 2023 using the trail design standards recommended in Chapter 4..
- Costs for lighting and security camera systems are not included.
- Trail maintenance operating costs are not included.

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Concrete)	Total Cost
1	1.9	\$221,000	\$2,373,000	\$2,594,000
2	0.9	\$150,000	\$932,000	\$1,082,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>\$371,000</b>	<b>\$3,305,000</b>	<b>\$3,676,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of construction with in one stage.*

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Gravel)	Total First Stage Cost	Marginal Cost of Second Stage Concrete	Long Run Final Cost
1	1.9	\$221,000	\$1,712,000	\$1,933,000	\$1,120,000	\$3,053,000
2	0.9	\$150,000	\$700,000	\$850,000	\$530,000	\$1,380,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>\$371,000</b>	<b>\$2,412,000</b>	<b>\$2,783,000</b>	<b>\$1,650,000</b>	<b>\$4,433,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of alternative construction construction method with intermediate soft surface trail.*

<sup>1</sup> PATH recommends that the Implementation Committee assess acquisition cost several months prior to the beginning of construction of each trail segment.

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL JOHNSON COUNTY MODEL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is an ambitious undertaking to build at least 211 miles of paved multi-use trails from Athens to Savannah and beyond. This trail planning effort has introduced the Johnson County community to the trail concepts and has generated some initial momentum that will need to be harnessed to bring the two-phase model project (and thus the rest of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail) to life.

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FORMATION

PATH recommends that the stakeholders who have helped shape the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail vision in Johnson County into a plan now stay on as founding members of the implementation team. Their first step will be to draw other committee members from the ranks of county staff, community leaders, outdoors people, and others to oversee the design and the construction of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Johnson County Model Project.

## FUNDING STRATEGY

PATH recommends that the stakeholders who have helped shape the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail vision in Johnson County into a plan now stay on as founding members of the implementation team. Their first step will be to draw other committee members from the ranks of county staff, community leaders, outdoors people, and others to oversee the design and the construction of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Johnson County Model Project.

## LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Some examples of local funding include:

- City/County budget allocations for parks, transportation, or sewer and water
- Bond referenda
- Sales surtax funds
- Hotel-Motel taxes
- Development impact fees
- In-kind products and services
- Philanthropic grants
- Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST)

## STATE OF GEORGIA FUNDING SOURCES

- Some examples of state funding include:
- Special project allocation
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)
- DNR Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

## DONATIONS

Foundations and generous individuals are often supportive of trail infrastructure especially if the benefits to the community are clearly spelled out. Additionally, fundraisers engaging smaller donors can yield substantial money to invest in design and engineering and eventually construction.

## FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prioritizes and distributes federal transportation funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program
- Federal Transit Administration Capital Funds (FTA)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program) (TA)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Safe Routes to School
- Safe Streets and Roads for All



## HIGH-LEVEL SCHEDULE

The PATH Foundation recommends that the 2.8-mile, two-phase model project completely within the Wrightsville city limits be completed within six years as broken down below:

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Building County-wide Support						
Phase 1: Design & Permit						
Phase 1: Construction						
Phase 2: Design & Permit						
Phase 2: Construction						

To ensure progress while understanding that staff time is a finite resource, PATH recommends that as the first phase of the model project shifts out of design and into construction, the next phase immediately goes into design. This reduces the lag time between completion of the first phase and completion of subsequent phases while promoting an efficient division of labor and limiting the impact on staff workloads.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

To maintain momentum and public enthusiasm for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail's Johnson model project, it is crucial to keep the public informed of the design and construction progress. PATH recommends that local leaders follow a communications schedule with four touch points with the public regarding the model project:

1. At the public meeting for adoption of the Georgia Hi-Lo Plan (and model project) by the Johnson County Board of Commissioners;
2. At a public meeting to gather feedback on the 30% design of the model project;
3. At a public meeting to show how the feedback impacted the 100% design of the model project; and
4. At a public meeting to share the construction schedule and any traffic impacts.

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL JOHNSON COUNTY LOOK AHEAD

When the last phase of the model project proceeds into design, the implementation team should begin planning for the extension of the Georgia Hi-Lo as the next step to completing a county-wide trail alignment. County leaders should engage key rural property owners with in-depth discussions with the goal of finding a cross-county alignment that would be acceptable to county residents.

Future destinations of the Georgia Hi-Lo trail in Johnson County will be planned with the support of county and local leadership and vetted with the community.

Assuming that a solid working relationship is developed, PATH recommends continuing to work with Norfolk-Southern to develop an opportunity for a rail trail connecting Wrightsville north to Tennille on the former W&T Railroad alignment. Connecting the two towns along the unused rail right of way would be transformational for both counties and could be the key to success of the overall Georgia Hi-Lo Trail in this part of the state.

PATH recommends that the charming town of Kite and the beautiful countryside in central Johnson County should be strongly considered as key destinations. Small towns such as Kite are in danger of disappearing and the economic benefits of a trail, even if marginal, could tip the balance in favor of survival.



*Nanny's Cafe in Kite.*



# EMANUEL COUNTY

In Emanuel County, the gently rolling hills and clay soils of the lower Piedmont region (and the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail's northern extent) begin their transition to the flatter coastal plain and its sandy soils. County land is primarily agricultural with cotton as the largest crop followed by peanuts.<sup>1</sup> The land is drained directly by the Ogeechee River in the north, the Canoochee River in the east and the Ochopee River in the west and south.

Emanuel County's population stood at 22,768 in the 2020 US Census, an increase of 0.8% since 2010 – a very slow growth rate compared with the rest of the state and nation. This stable population combined with substantial historical assets, a state college and technical school, as well as a popular state park and beautiful countryside has the components necessary for building a successful regional trail. When complete, the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will help Emanuel County achieve its long-term goals of increasing the quality of life for residents while attracting (or retaining) the next generation of residents to form families, grow local businesses, and continue Emanuel's fine traditions into tomorrow.

Key destinations that speak to Emanuel County's traditions were identified early in the Georgia Hi-Lo planning phase. The planning team stakeholders and members of the public pointed with pride to East Georgia State College, Downtown Swainsboro, Downtown Twin City, the Ochopee Dunes National Wildlife Refuge, and the George L. Smith State Park as places where they wanted to go and places they want the world to know about.



*Parrish Mill Covered Bridge in George L. Smith State Park.*



*East Georgia State College in Swainsboro.*

<sup>1</sup> chrome-extension: //efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Online\_Resources/County\_Profiles/Georgia/cp13107.pdf

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EMANUEL COUNTY MODEL PROJECT

Following the strategy developed for the other counties along the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail, PATH is recommending that a model project be built to give residents a sense of what the trail looks like and how it could be used to connect the key destinations. The model project proposed by PATH, in collaboration with key county stakeholders, and the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Initiative is a two-phase 4.4-mile trail consisting of a mix of paved, multi-use greenway trail and a “calm street” strategy where bikes and pedestrians share the roadway with cars. The proposed model project connects the Twin City Welcome Center and commercial areas to the George L. Smith State Park and its hiking trails, historic sites, and camping amenities. A two-phased approach enables Emanuel County leadership flexibility in grant applications and their corresponding match contribution requirements. The map to the right identifies the approximate model project location, the two construction phases and the alignment options to consider for Phase 1.



*George L. Smith State Park.*

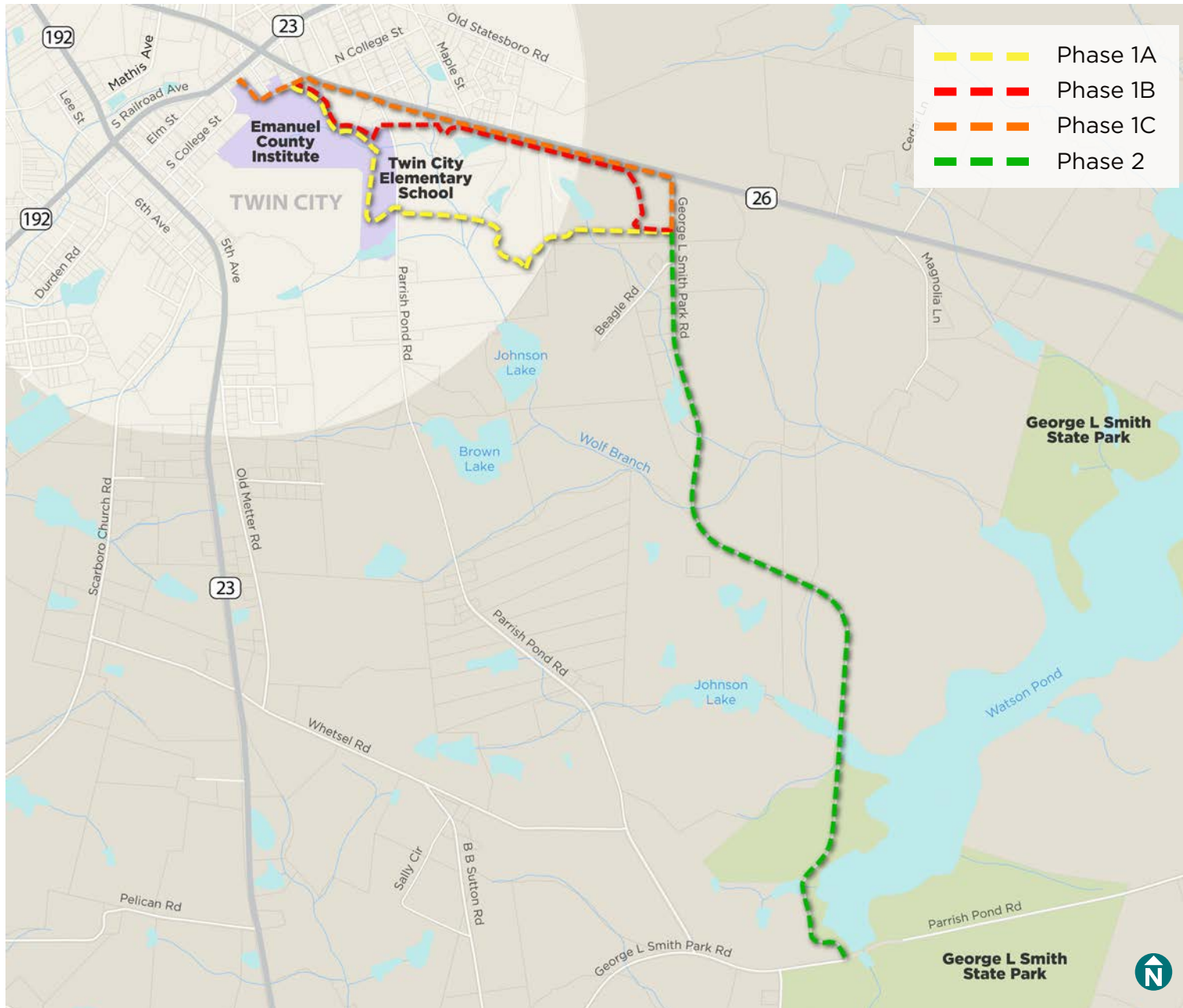
## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EMANUEL COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 1

Phase 1 is an approximately 1.9-mile trail segment to be built on public road right of way, Board of Education (BoE) property, and privately owned parcels requiring easements. Phase 1 has three options under consideration by local leaders and stakeholders – all of which connect the Welcome Center to George L. Smith State Park Road. Of the three, PATH recommends Phase 1 Option A, the alignment that is mostly greenway, because of its superior trail user experience. The Option A alignment is well away from the intensity of traffic along US-80 and allows users to feel safe and relaxed while traveling on bicycles or walking with their families between the state park and the commercial areas of Twin City.

The next best alternative, Phase 1 – Option B, is approximately 50% greenway and 50% sidepath. While not as inviting as the all-greenway option it offers distance from the roadway for part of its alignment.

The still valuable, but in some ways least hospitable alignment is the all-sidepath Phase 1 – Option C. The stress-inducing noise of traffic on US-80 degrades the user experience – especially if one is hoping to continue the serenity of the state park. Option C, however, is a substantial improvement over the no-build option (the existing condition) where families are largely unwilling to risk walking or riding bikes between the state park and Twin City.





Georgia Hi-Lo Emanuel County model project phasing map.

## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EMANUEL COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2

Phase 2 is an approximately 2.5-mile extension of the Phase 1 Trail. Independent of which option is chosen for Phase 1, all three converge at the George L. Smith State Park Road and then follow that road to the state park visitors center and the Parrish Mill Covered Bridge.

Phase 2 relies on a calm street strategy along the relatively lightly traveled George L. Smith Road. This calm street strategy is effective because the state park is the primary destination along George L. Smith State Park Road, which has just five residences. PATH recommends installing signage clearly indicating the speed limit and announcing the presence of trail users. The state and county should also collaborate on reducing the speed limit if it is over 30 mph.

While evaluating options for Phase 2, the PATH team learned that a private entity is in the process of building a large campground adjacent to the state park entry road. This will both increase the demand for the new trail as campers seek access to Twin City and the state park as well as increase the vehicular traffic (and the chance of collisions with bicyclists and pedestrians) along the state park road.

Emanuel County staff, state park staff, and the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative should monitor traffic volumes and trail user feedback regarding the experience along the Phase 2 Trail. Should traffic volumes exceed a comfortable threshold, or if trail users start to complain of a degraded experience, the County may need to upgrade the “calm street” to a paved sidepath set further off the western side of the road (where there are fewer vehicle crossings – see the image to the right an example of what this could look like) to ensure that trail users continue to feel safe.



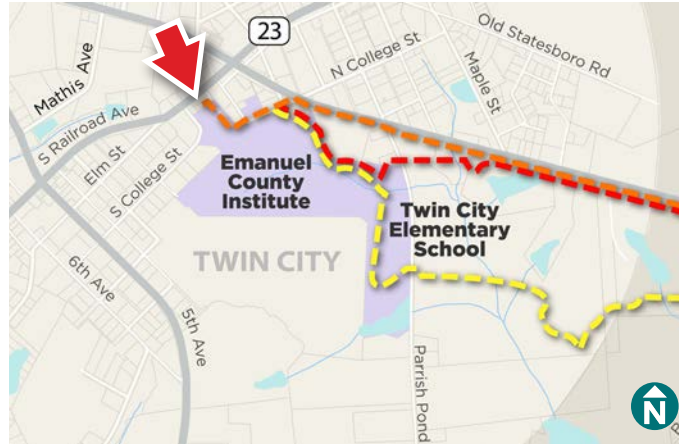
*Example of sidepath along Park Road in South Lake Tahoe, CA.*

*Image Source: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.*

*Accessed via <https://ruralsidepath.com/physically-separated/sidepath>*



## EMANUEL COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2 N COLLEGE AND RAILROAD ST INTERSECTION



Top left: Existing condition of the intersection of N College Street and Railroad Street at Emanuel County Institute.

Top right: Context map for photo location.

Bottom: Vision graphic for proposed trail with pocket park.

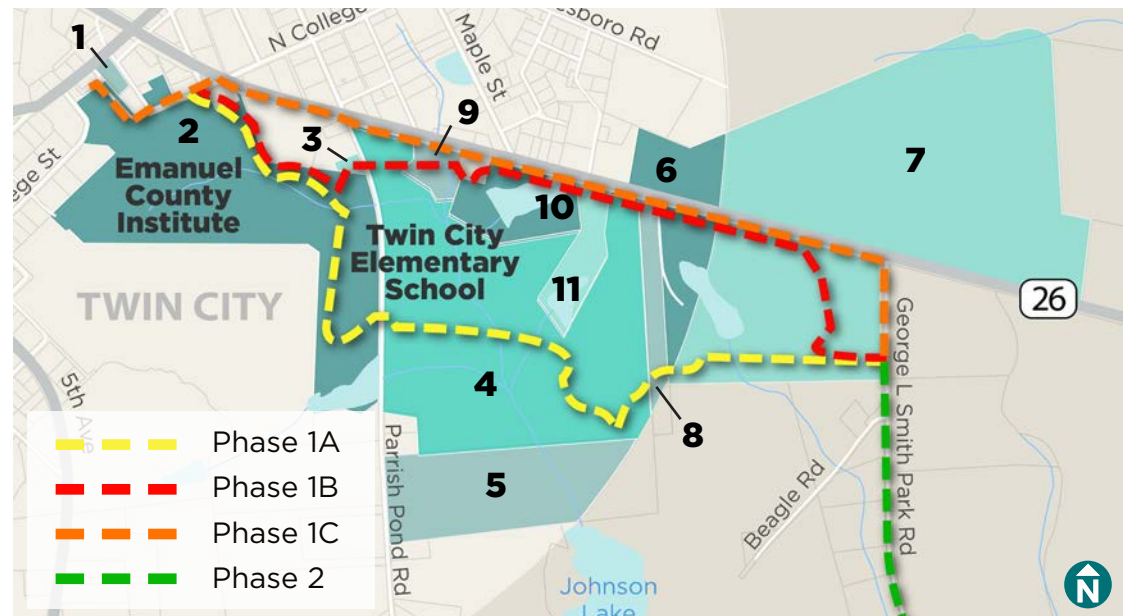


## MODEL PROJECT – PARCEL INFORMATION

Previously described the Phase 1 Trail has three options that county leadership and stakeholders are evaluating. The map on the bottom right hand side of the page shows the three options and the parcels where easements would potentially be required. Details regarding the parcels are summarized in the chart following the map.

The information provided below is offered in draft format at the planning level. No decisions have been made and no aspect of the project will move forward without the full consent of the subject property owners. Under no circumstances does the county envision using eminent domain to acquire easements. Property owners who grant access for the public to use a trail are shielded from liability by Georgia law. Further details regarding precise alignments and required easements will be determined in the design phase of the project.

Key	Option	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
1	Trailhead	Public	N. College St	T05 036	City of Twin City
2	A & B	Public	S. College St	T05 033	Emanuel County Board of Educ.
3	A	Public	Parish Pond Rd	178 020	J B Forehand & Judie Forehand Lewis
4	A & B	Private	Hwy 80	178 024	Brown/Morrison Family LLLP and Crawford Shirley Brown Living Trust
5	A	Private	Hwy 80	178 024C	Brown/Morrison Family LLLP
6	A	Private	Hwy 80	178 009A	William L. Donaldson
7	A & B	Private	3045 Hwy 80	178 009	William L. Donaldson
8	A	Private	Hwy 80	178 025	Brown/Morrison Family LLLP and Crawford Shirley Brown Living Trust
9	B	Private	2894 Hwy 80	178 034	Deborah Fountain
10	B	Private	Hwy 80	178 024B	Brown/Morrison Family LLLP
11	B	Private	Hwy 80	178 024D	Brown/Morrison Family LLLP



*Emanuel County parcels potentially impacted by the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Model Project.*

1 See <chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnbpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf>



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EMANUEL COUNTY MODEL PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

The charts below summarize the preliminary cost estimates for the model project phases identified in the previous section. PATH recommends updating this cost estimate at every design interval to accommodate the change in cost over time. These cost estimates come with the following considerations:

- The cost for building a soft surface trail as an intermediate step towards full-length paving is offered as an alternative that lowers initial costs and enables more miles of trail to be brought on line sooner. Concrete is the strongly recommended long-term design solution both for access for people with disabilities and for substantially lower ongoing maintenance costs.
- The costs for public right-of-way, easement and property acquisition are not included.<sup>1</sup>
- Estimated P&E (Planning and Engineering) costs include surveying, design, and engineering for construction, permitting, bidding, and construction administration of the project.
- Estimated Construction Costs for a 10-foot wide trail are based on material and labor pricing from Fall 2023 using the trail design standards recommended in Chapter 4..
- Costs for lighting and security camera systems are not included.
- Trail maintenance operating costs are not included.

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Concrete)	Total Cost
1A	2.0	\$288,000	\$4,015,000	\$4,303,000
1B(Alt)	1.7	\$243,000	\$1,905,000	\$2,148,000
1C(Alt)	1.5	\$255,000	\$1,818,000	\$2,073,000
2	2.5	\$68,000	\$187,000	\$255,000
<b>Total*</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>\$356,000</b>	<b>\$4,202,000</b>	<b>\$4,558,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of construction with in one stage..*

*\*Total includes phase 1A and Phase 2 costs*

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Gravel)	Total First Stage Cost	Marginal Cost of Second Stage Concrete	Long Run Final Cost
1A	2.0	\$288,000	\$3,437,000	\$3,725,000	\$966,000	\$4,691,000
1B(Alt)	1.7	\$243,000	\$1,391,000	\$1,634,000	\$943,000	\$2,577,000
1C(Alt)	1.5	\$255,000	\$1,316,000	\$1,571,000	\$848,000	\$2,419,000
2	2.5	\$68,000	\$187,000	\$255,000	N/A	\$255,000
<b>Total*</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>\$356,000</b>	<b>\$3,624,000</b>	<b>\$3,980,000</b>	<b>\$966,000</b>	<b>\$4,946,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of alternative construction construction method with intermediate soft surface trail..*

<sup>1</sup> PATH recommends that the Implementation Committee assess acquisition cost several months prior to the beginning of construction of each trail segment.

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EMANUEL COUNTY MODEL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is an ambitious undertaking to build at least 211 miles of paved multi-use trails from Athens to Savannah and beyond. This trail planning effort has introduced the Emanuel County community to the trail concepts and has generated some initial momentum that will need to be harnessed to bring this two-phase model project to life (thus taking vital steps toward completing the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail).

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FORMATION

PATH recommends that the stakeholders who have helped shape the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail vision in Emanuel County into a plan now stay on as founding members of the implementation team. Their first step will be to draw other committee members from the ranks of county staff, community leaders, outdoors people, and others to oversee the design and the construction of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Emanuel County Model Project.

## FUNDING STRATEGY

The PATH team recommends that Emanuel County develop a multi-year grant strategy including back-up plans for those times when grant applications are not successful. Well-thought-out local funding and grant strategies are highly attractive to both governmental granting agencies and to philanthropic donors. They form the basis of a successful public-private partnership that can be leveraged to maintain momentum and keep the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Emanuel County Model Project on track until all 4.4 miles are completed and Emanuel County residents can start to experience the benefits of trails.

## LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Some examples of local funding include:

- City/County budget allocations for parks, transportation, or sewer and water
- Bond referenda
- Sales surtax funds
- Hotel-Motel taxes
- Development impact fees
- In-kind products and services
- Philanthropic grants
- Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST)

## STATE OF GEORGIA FUNDING SOURCES

- Some examples of state funding include:
- Special project allocation
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)
- DNR Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

## DONATIONS

Foundations and generous individuals are often supportive of trail infrastructure especially if the benefits to the community are clearly spelled out. Additionally, fundraisers engaging smaller donors can yield substantial money to invest in design and engineering and eventually construction.

## FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prioritizes and distributes federal transportation funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program
- Federal Transit Administration Capital Funds (FTA)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program) (TA)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Safe Routes to School
- Safe Streets and Roads for All



## HIGH-LEVEL SCHEDULE

The PATH Foundation recommends that the 4.4-mile, two-phase model project between Twin City and George L. Smith State Park be completed within five years as broken down below:

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Building County-wide Support						
Phase 1: Design & Permit						
Phase 1: Construction						
Phase 2: Design & Permit						
Phase 2: Construction						

To ensure progress while understanding that staff time is a finite resource, PATH recommends that as the first phase of the model project shifts out of design and into construction, the next phase immediately goes into design. This reduces the lag time between completion of the first phase and completion of subsequent phases while promoting an efficient division of labor and limiting the impact on staff workloads.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

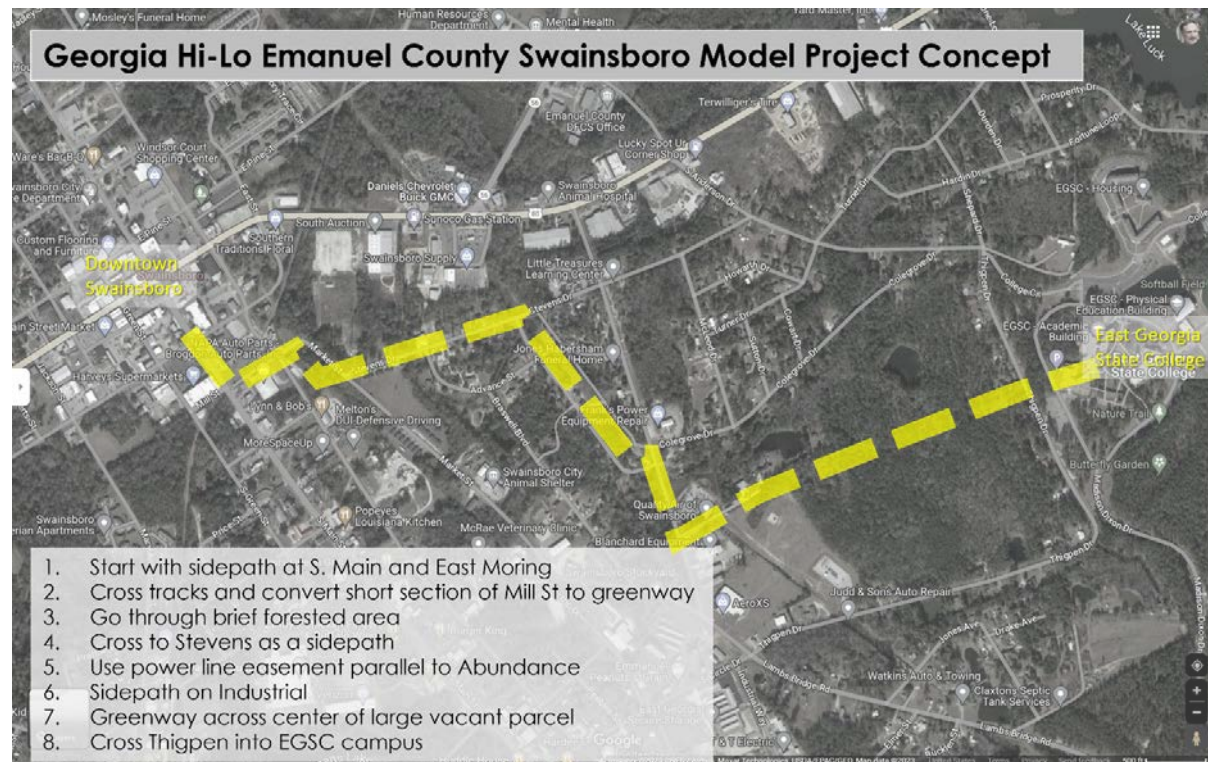
To maintain momentum and public enthusiasm for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail's Emanuel model project, it is crucial to keep the public informed of the design and construction progress. PATH recommends that local leaders follow a communications schedule with four touch points with the public regarding the model project:

1. At the public meeting for adoption of the Georgia Hi-Lo Plan (and model project) by the Emanuel County Board of Commissioners;
2. At a public meeting to gather feedback on the 30% design of the model project;
3. At a public meeting to show how the feedback impacted the 100% design of the model project; and
4. At a public meeting to share the construction schedule and any traffic impacts.

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EMANUEL COUNTY LOOK AHEAD

When the last phase of the model project proceeds into design, the implementation team should begin planning for the extension of the Georgia Hi-Lo as the next step to completing a county-wide trail alignment. County leaders should engage key rural property owners with in-depth discussions with the goal of finding a cross-county alignment that would be acceptable to county residents.

Future destinations of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail in Emanuel County include the City of Swainsboro and an approximately 3.4-mile link between the East Georgia State College, Downtown Swainsboro, and the Southeastern Technical College. This concept was evaluated by the PATH team, the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative and stakeholders including the president of the East Georgia State College and support staff. The concept was broken into two construction phases – (1) College Main Campus to Downtown and (2) Downtown to Technical School. At the time of the PATH team's evaluation of a possible model project in Swainsboro (Spring/Summer 2023) city leadership was not available to weigh in on this option. PATH recommends that the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative maintain contact with Emanuel County and establish an open channel with City of Swainsboro leadership to evaluate the potential for a future model project.



*Unvetted Phase 1 concept of Swainsboro model trail project (approximately 1.9 miles linking the college to downtown).*



# BULLOCH COUNTY

As the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail makes its way south from Athens and the rolling hills and red clays of the Georgia Piedmont, it gradually enters the coastal plain – a flatter land with sandier soils given more to agricultural crops such as cotton and peanuts and less to timber.

Bulloch County is firmly in the coastal plain and much of the county is bucolic and rural and home to many graceful older buildings and homesteads. As with the other Georgia Hi-Lo counties, Bulloch is drained by tributaries of the Ogeechee River – including the Canoochee River and Lotts Creek. The northern part of the county is primarily agricultural and dotted with remnant forests of longleaf pine and live oak. The southern and eastern parts of the county become increasingly swampy with remnant islands of bald cypress forests interspersed through land drained for cotton production.



*Upper Lotts Creek Primitive Baptist Church Historic site.*



*Statue of Blues music legend Blind Willie McTell at the Visitors Center in Statesboro.*

Whereas the Georgia Hi-Lo counties to the east are either losing population or are growing very slowly, Bulloch County is growing rapidly. Bulloch County's population stood at 81,099 in the 2020 US Census, an increase of 16% over 2010, growing much faster than the rest of Georgia. The last three years have seen even more rapid growth as Bulloch becomes closely tied to Savannah's economic influence. The economic impact of the nearby EV manufacturing investments currently under construction is expected to be significant. Instead of seeking strategies to attract new residents, as counties to the north and west are doing, Bulloch County is preparing for a dramatic influx in population and economic activity. Indeed, during the planning phase, Bulloch County staff was unable to participate citing the need to focus on ensuring that the investments needed to support the EV manufacturing facilities under construction. The planning work thus largely focused on the city of Statesboro.



Planning activities involving stakeholders and the public identified several key destinations within Bulloch County. They include Georgia Southern University and its beautiful Botanical Garden, Upper Lotts Creek Church, the town of Register, and the Farmers Market and business district in downtown Statesboro.

Statesboro is the county seat and largest city in the county and home to Georgia Southern University (GSU), which is the city's largest employer and attended by more than 22,000 students. (When school is in session, the city's population increases by 60%.) Statesboro has three existing multi-use trails. (1) The Willie McTell Trail uses publicly owned land and an abandoned rail line to connect downtown Statesboro to the Memorial Park ballfields across from the GSU campus. (2) The S&S Greenway is a trail built on the railroad bed of the now defunct S&S Railroad with one terminus on Gentilly Road and the other on Burkhalter Road at the Pretoria Station Trailhead, approximately 3 miles to the southeast. (3) A multi-use 8-foot sidepath extends along the south side of East Main Street (GA-24) for approximately one mile to provide access to Mill Creek Regional Park.

Additionally, the county has funded plans to extend the S&S Greenway some distance to the south along Josh Hagin Road towards the city of Brooklet (but to not enter Brooklet at this time). The GSU campus also has its own internal network of pathways and trails that are not, however, comfortably accessible, as the campus is surrounded by high-volume, high speed arterial roads with limited pedestrian and bicyclist crossing opportunities.



*Entrance to the S&S Greenway on Gentilly Road.*



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL BULLOCH COUNTY MODEL PROJECT

In general, Statesboro has excellent trail assets that are in need of being tied together. The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail has an opportunity to do just that with a five-phase 4.2-mile model project that can showcase the value of trails to the community and to county residents as a whole. The model project identified by PATH staff, in collaboration with key county stakeholders, consists of a mix of multi-use greenway trails, sidepaths, and a “calm street” strategy where bikes and pedestrians share the roadway with cars. When complete, the model project will connect the existing S&S Greenway, the existing Willie McTell Trail, four city parks, a city school by leveraging railroad rights of way, creek floodplains, and city streets. A five-phased approach is warranted in this developed environment, as it enables the City of Statesboro staff and leadership flexibility in grant applications and their corresponding match contribution requirements.

The map on the next page identifies the approximate model project location, the five construction phases and Statesboro’s existing trails. This map is followed by detailed descriptions of each of the phases.

- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Phase 3
- Phase 4
- Phase 5
- Existing Trail



Map of the proposed Bulloch County model project.

## GEORGIA HI-LO BULLOCH COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 1

Phase 1 is a 1.1-mile segment that will connect the existing terminus of the S&S Greenway to Statesboro's Memorial Park with bicycle and pedestrian access to the northern tip of GSU's campus at the intersection of Zetterower Avenue, Tillman Road, and Fair Road. The Phase 1 Trail begins at the Gentilly Road trailhead of the S&S Greenway and proceeds south on the east side of Gentilly Road as a 10-12-foot-wide sidepath until it reaches the uncontrolled intersection at Wendwood Drive, where a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal allows safe passage across Gentilly Road. The trail continues west along Wendwood Drive as a calm street connection where bicyclists share the road with vehicles. Given that the street has no sidewalks, PATH recommends that the city install a sidewalk on at least one side of the street to give pedestrians a safe space to walk away from the relatively narrow traffic lanes.

At the intersection of Ed Moore Court, the Phase 1 Trail turns north and follows property lines behind College Plaza with a new bridge to be built over Little Lotts Creek. The trail then turns west and parallels the channelized creek where the City's public works department is planning stormwater management improvements. At Zetterower Road, the Phase 1 Trail makes a mid-block crossing that syncs up with an existing spur to the Willie McTell Trail with a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal.



*Existing trail crossing through E Grady Street.*



## GEORGIA HI-LO BULLOCH COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2

Phase 2 is a 1.1-mile segment that connects the Phase 1 trail, the Willie McTell Trail, and Memorial Park to Renaissance Park and Revered WD Kent Park on Statesboro's west side.

The Phase 2 Trail begins at the end of Phase 1 in Memorial Park where it shares the Willie McTell Greenway for approximately 500 feet until far enough away from the baseball outfield to make a safe crossing of Memorial Park as a greenway. It crosses Fair Road with an at-grade, mid-block crossing controlled by a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal.

To the west of Fair Road, the Phase 2 Trail enters the proposed Blue Mile development which will consist of housing, retail, and entertainment components.<sup>1</sup> The developer and the City of Statesboro envision repurposing the existing Little Lotts Creek channel into an inviting space. The trail will be designed in collaboration with the development to provide safe and inviting bicycle and pedestrian access to this new community amenity from the surrounding neighborhoods. The PATH team proposes that the trail run along the north side of Little Lotts Creek within the development envelope.

On the west side of the Blue Mile development, the Phase 2 Trail bridges the creek to the south and continues parallel to the east side of the railroad tracks for a short distance to South College Avenue. The trail traverses South College Avenue near the vehicular stop bar for the railroad crossing, and then turns north using the existing South College Avenue railroad crossing as a sidepath on the west side of the road.

The Phase 2 Trail crosses Little Lotts Creek as a sidepath along South College Avenue and then turns northwest to parallel the north side of Little Lotts Creek as a greenway on a long slender city-owned parcel for about 1,500 feet with a 350-foot spur to Institute Street that is also on city property. The trail then crosses onto private property owned by the Oliff family for approximately 1,000 feet on two flood plain parcels in an area that is not developable, and for which the City's public works department is contemplating stormwater management improvements.

<sup>1</sup> <https://borobluemile.com/>

The Phase 2 Trail then makes an at-grade, mid-block crossing to the north side of West Jones Avenue controlled by a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal. The trail is now in Renaissance Park on city-owned land. It crosses out of the park onto privately owned land in the Little Lotts Creek floodplain in an area that is not developable before making another at-grade, mid-block crossing of West Grady Street into the Reverend W.D. Kent Park, where a spur trail provides access to the center of the park.



*Willie McTell Trail at Fair Road.*

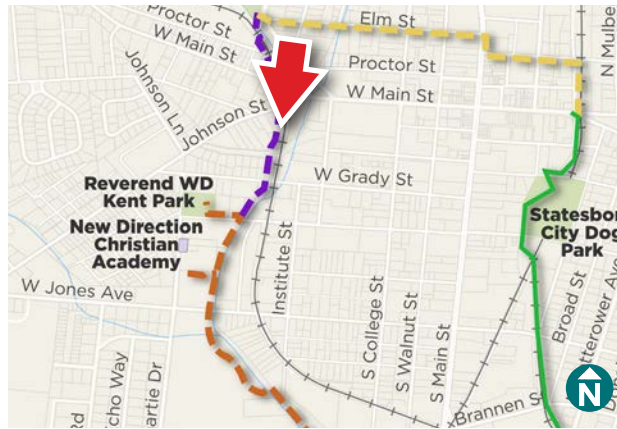
## GEORGIA HI-LO BULLOCH COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 3

Phase 3 is a 0.5-mile segment that connects the Phase 2 Trail and the Reverend W.D. Kent Park to the Statesboro's Luetta Moore Park on the west side.

The Phase 3 Trail picks up as a short sidepath on the north side of West Grady Street on land owned by the Tabernacle Baptist Church at the mid-block crossing built in Phase 2. It then re-enters city-owned property as a greenway heading northeast along the west side of the Little Lotts Creek floodplain. At Bulloch Street, the trail makes an at-grade, midblock crossing controlled by a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal, crossing the existing bridge as a narrow sidepath.

At this point, the Phase 3 Trail makes a sharp turn north and becomes a greenway set between the stream to the west and the railroad tracks to the east. This alignment requires permission from the railroad owner and does not necessarily require the removal of tracks. The paved multi-use trail continues north to the west of the tracks and crosses Johnson Street, West Main Street, Proctor Street, and Blitch Lane in rapid succession. Each crossing may have a user-controlled pedestrian traffic signal.

At Blitch Lane, the Phase 3 Trail turns due north and enters Luetta Moore Park and meets an existing paved trail on the west side of the park.



Top right: Context map for photo location.

Bottom: Vision graphic for proposed trail following the existing rail line.



## GEORGIA HI-LO BULLOCH COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 4

Phase 4 is a 0.8-mile segment that will connect Luetta Moore Park and Downtown Statesboro using sidepaths on city streets. Phase 4 terminates at the Willie McTell Trail, thus creating an approximately 3.4-mile trail loop that provides safe and inviting bicycle and pedestrian access to thousands of Statesboro residents.

The Phase 4 Trail splits off from the Phase 3 Trail south of the Blitch Lane crossing as an at-grade intersection crossing Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (MLK). This intersection is currently uncontrolled, and the user-activated pedestrian traffic signal crossing design will need to consider that southbound drivers confront a road that curves to the left, creating a potential line of sight issue.

Once across MLK, the Phase 4 Trail continues as a 10-12-foot-wide sidepath (with a 5-foot landscape buffer) on the south side of Elm Street with user-activated pedestrian traffic signals at the intersection crossings at Bobby Donaldson Avenue, North College Street, North Walnut Street, and North Main Street. The trail continues south on the east side of North Main Street for 175-feet as a cycle track that would be created by shifting the street's lane alignment to the west approximately 9 feet. North Main Street is 42 feet wide at this point with two through lanes and a left turn lane. Reducing the through and turn lanes to 11 feet each is feasible in this low-speed environment.

On Hill Street, the Phase 4 Trail reverts to a calm street environment with a possible two-way 9-foot-wide cycle track on the north side of the street and two 9.5-foot travel lanes. This is feasible given the low-volume, low-speed environment. Painting the cycle track would still enable truck access if needed for events or special deliveries. Pedestrians would continue to use the existing sidewalks.

The Phase 4 Trail makes an uncontrolled crossing at Siebald Street (a short alleyway), and at-grade intersection crossings at Oak Street and Railroad Street that are governed by user-activated pedestrian traffic signals. At the Railroad Street intersection with Hill Street, the trail turns south and crosses

Hill Street at a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal before proceeding south. PATH recommends changing the existing angled parking to parallel parking to allow for a 5' wide landscape buffer and a 10' to 12' wide multi-use trail.

At South Main Street, given that this needs to be a focal point for highlighting the existence of the trail for both visitors generally and drivers in particular, PATH recommends reconfiguring the intersection to eliminate the eastbound dog leg turn from East Main Street to Savannah Avenue and replace it with a more traditional "T" intersection, expanding the existing westbound Savannah Avenue traffic alignment to accommodate two-way traffic. The Railroad Street crossing would largely remain unchanged, except for the eastern leg, which would now accommodate a pedestrian crossing widened to the same width as the trail, to be governed by a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal.



*Existing intersection of Main Street, Railroad Street, and Savannah Avenue.*

## GEORGIA HI-LO BULLOCH COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 5

Phase 5 is a 0.7-mile segment that connects Luetta Moore Park to the Trilogy Achievement Academy on Williams Road. The city's public works department has already been asked to explore a trail connection between these two destinations.

The Phase 5 Trail begins at the end of the existing paved trail on the northwestern end of Luetta Moore Park. It follows the line west from the end of Church Street across a new bridge over the Little Lotts Creek drainage channel. At this point, a spur access trail continues west for approximately 300 feet to Morris Street, and the main trail turns north onto what may be abandoned railroad right of way (no tracks are present, and no property ownership information is publicly available). The trail proceeds along this railroad right of way with crossings at Donnie Simmons Way and Williams Road, controlled by user-activated pedestrian traffic signals. The trail heads west on Williams Road as a 10-12-foot wide sidepath on the north side of the street, crossing one privately owned parcel before arriving at the Trilogy Achievement Academy, where bike racks and benches should be placed.

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will continue north from Williams Road in a fashion, to be planned and designed in collaboration with the stakeholders and the community.



*Proposed modified intersection of E Main St, Railroad St, and Savannah Ave.*



## MODEL PROJECT – PARCEL INFORMATION

The information provided below is offered in draft format at the planning level. No decisions have been made and no aspect of the project will move forward without the full consent of the subject property owners. Under no circumstances does the county envision using eminent domain to acquire easements. Property owners who grant access for the public to use a trail are shielded from liability by Georgia law.<sup>1</sup> Further details regarding precise alignments and required easements will be determined in the design phase of the project.

Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
1	1	Private	Wendwood Dr	S42 000032 001	Neuro Real Statesboro LLC
2	1	Private	Fair Rd	S31 000013 000	South East Wood Products LLC
3	1	Private	520 Fair Rd	S31 000015 000	College Plaza LLC
4	1	Private	500 S. Zetterower Ave	S31 000024 000	Evans Concrete LLC
5	1	Private	618 S. Zetterower Ave	S31 000021 002	Carmat LLC
6	1	Public			Statesboro Memorial Park
7	1	Private	441 Fair Rd	S31 000009 000	CTC Statesboro GA Fee 6861 LLC
8	1	Public	Fair Rd	MS61000001000	Board of Regents USG
9	2	Private	423 Fair Rd	S31 000004 000	Blue Mile Foundation Inc
10	2	Private	430 South Main St	S21 000039 000	Downtown Statesboro Development Auth
11	2	Private	431 South Main St	S21 000020 000	Blue Mile Foundation Inc
12	2	Private	South Main St	S21 000021 001	Blue Mile Foundation Inc
13	2	Private	435 South Main St	S21 000011 001	Hendley J R Foundation Inc

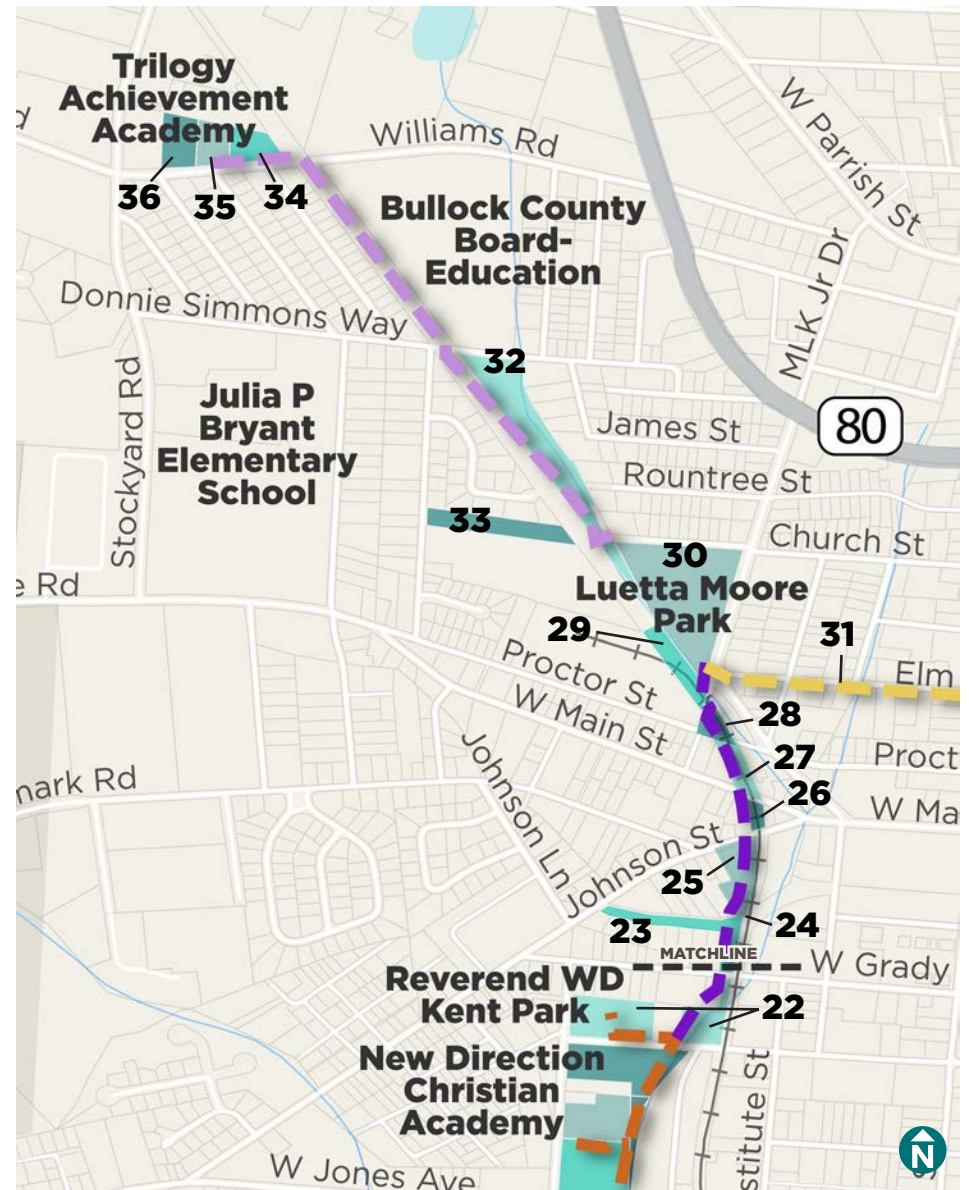
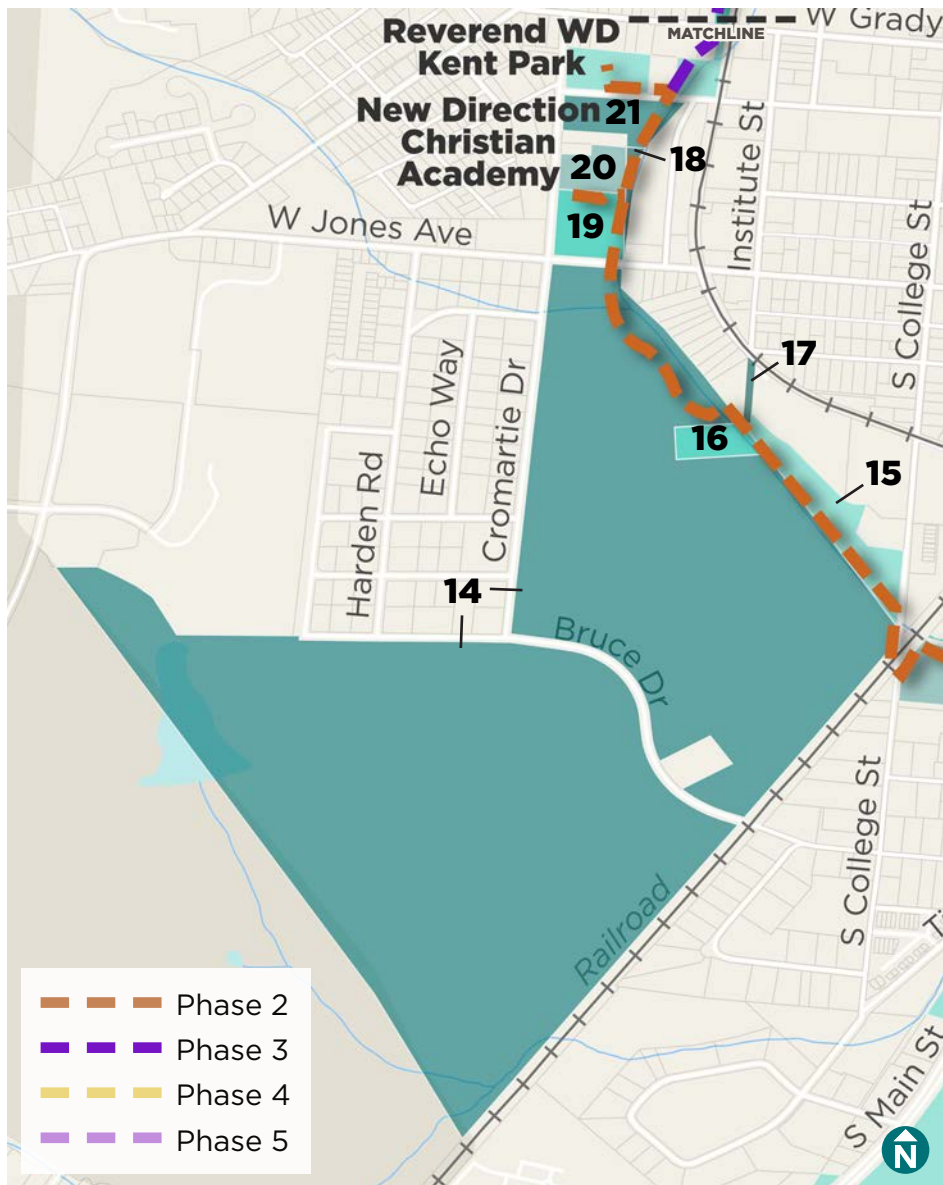
<sup>1</sup> See <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf>



*Bulloch County Hi-Lo model project map.*



Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
14	2	Private	Bruce Dr	MS41000035000	Daniel B Oliff et al
15	2	Public	South College St	MS50000050003	Mayor & City Council Statesboro
16	2	Private	South College St	MS50000050000	Virginia Oliff
17	2	Public	South College St	MS50000050002	Mayor & City Council Statesboro
18	2	Public	West Grady St	S11 000084A000	City of Statesboro
19	2	Public	130 Parker St	S11 000083 000	Mayor & City Council Statesboro
20	2	Public	130 Parker St	S11 000084 000	Mayor & City Council Statesboro
21	2	Private	106 Parker St	S11 000086A000	Christopher Frink
22	3	Public	107 West Grady St	S11 000087 000	City of Statesboro
23	3	Private	Holland St	S11 000099 000	Eva Baker Holland et al.
24	3	Private	Unknown	NA	Railroad ROW
25	3	Private	205 Johnson St	S10 000065 000	Nadine Walker
26	3	Private	West Main St	S10 000004 002	Bulloch Fertilizer Co Inc
27	3	Private	Proctor St	S10 000004 001	Bulloch Fertilizer Co Inc
28	3	Private	Proctor St	S10 000005 000	Bulloch Fertilizer Co Inc
29	3	Private	283 Proctor St B	S10 000003 001	Bulloch Fertilizer Co Inc
30	3	Public	585 Martin Luther King	S09 000099 000	City of Statesboro
31	4	No easements needed, sidepath in public right of way			
32	5	Public	Donnie Simmons Way	S09 000043 000	Mayor & City Council Statesboro
33	5	Private	Unknown	NA	Railroad ROW
34	5	Private	Morris St	S09 000105 000	Habitat for Humanity of Bulloch



Bulloch County Hi-Lo model project maps.



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL BULLOCH COUNTY MODEL PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

The charts below summarize the preliminary cost estimates for the model project phases identified in the previous section. PATH recommends updating this cost estimate at every design interval to accommodate the change in cost over time. These cost estimates come with the following considerations:

- The cost for building a soft surface trail as an intermediate step towards full-length paving is offered as an alternative that lowers initial costs and enables more miles of trail to be brought on line sooner. Concrete is the strongly recommended long-term design solution both for access for people with disabilities and for substantially lower ongoing maintenance costs.
- The costs for public right-of-way, easement and property acquisition are not included.<sup>1</sup>
- Estimated P&E (Planning and Engineering) costs include surveying, design, and engineering for construction, permitting, bidding, and construction administration of the project.
- Estimated Construction Costs for a 10-foot wide trail are based on material and labor pricing from Fall 2023 using the trail design standards recommended in Chapter 4..
- Costs for lighting and security camera systems are not included.
- Trail maintenance operating costs are not included.

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Concrete)	Total Cost
1	1.3	\$216,000	\$1,748,000	\$1,964,000
2	1.3	\$281,000	\$1,798,000	\$2,079,000
3	0.5	\$142,000	\$555,000	\$697,000
4	0.7	\$251,000	\$1,327,000	\$1,578,000
5	0.7	\$205,000	\$1,013,000	\$1,218,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>\$1,095,000</b>	<b>\$6,441,000</b>	<b>\$7,536,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of construction with in one stage.*

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Gravel)	Total First Stage Cost	Marginal Cost of Second Stage Concrete	Long Run Final Cost
1	1.3	\$216,000	\$1,526,000	\$1,742,000	\$431,000	\$2,173,000
2	1.3	\$281,000	\$1,414,000	\$1,695,000	\$713,000	\$2,408,000
3	0.5	\$142,000	\$447,000	\$589,000	\$302,000	\$891,000
4	0.7	\$251,000	\$966,000	\$1,217,000	\$437,000	\$1,654,000
5	0.7	\$205,000	\$806,000	\$1,011,000	\$393,000	\$1,404,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>\$1,095,000</b>	<b>\$5,159,000</b>	<b>\$6,254,000</b>	<b>\$2,276,000</b>	<b>\$8,530,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of alternative construction construction method with intermediate soft surface trail.*

<sup>1</sup> PATH recommends that the Implementation Committee assess acquisition cost several months prior to the beginning of construction of each trail segment.

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL BULLOCH COUNTY MODEL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is an ambitious undertaking to build at least 211 miles of paved multi-use trails from Athens to Savannah and beyond. This trail planning effort has introduced the Statesboro community to the trail concepts and has generated some initial momentum that will need to be harnessed to bring the five-phase model project (and subsequently the rest of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail) to life.

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FORMATION

PATH recommends that the stakeholders who have helped shape the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail vision in the City of Statesboro into a plan now stay on as founding members of the implementation team. Their first step will be to draw other committee members from the ranks of city and county staff, community leaders, outdoors people, and others to oversee the design and the construction of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail City of Statesboro Model Project.

## FUNDING STRATEGY

The PATH team recommends that the City of Statesboro develop a multi-year grant strategy including back-up plans for those times when grant applications are not successful. Well-thought-out local funding and grant strategies are highly attractive to governmental granting agencies and philanthropic donors. They form the basis of a successful public-private partnership that can be leveraged to maintain momentum and keep the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail City of Statesboro Model Project on track until all 4.2 miles are completed and Bulloch County residents can start to experience the benefits of trails.

## LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Some examples of local funding include:

- City/County budget allocations for parks, transportation, or sewer and water
- Bond referenda
- Sales surtax funds
- Hotel-Motel taxes
- Development impact fees
- In-kind products and services
- Philanthropic grants
- Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST)

## STATE OF GEORGIA FUNDING SOURCES

- Some examples of state funding include:
- Special project allocation
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)
- DNR Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

## DONATIONS

Foundations and generous individuals are often supportive of trail infrastructure especially if the benefits to the community are clearly spelled out. Additionally, fundraisers engaging smaller donors can yield substantial money to invest in design and engineering and eventually construction.

## FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prioritizes and distributes federal transportation funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program
- Federal Transit Administration Capital Funds (FTA)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program) (TA)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Safe Routes to School
- Safe Streets and Roads for All



## HIGH-LEVEL SCHEDULE

The PATH Foundation recommends that the 4.2-mile, five-phase model project be completed within ten years as broken down below:

	2024	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
Building County-wide Support											
Phase 1: Design & Permit											
Phase 1: Construction											
Phase 2: Design & Permit											
Phase 2: Construction											
Phase 3: Design & Permit											
Phase 3: Construction											
Phase 4: Design & Permit											
Phase 4: Construction											
Phase 5: Design & Permit											
Phase 5: Construction											

To ensure progress while understanding that staff time is a finite resource, PATH recommends that as the first phase of the model project shifts out of design and into construction, the next phase immediately goes into design. This reduces the lag time between completion of the first phase and completion of subsequent phases while promoting an efficient division of labor and limiting the impact on staff workloads.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

To maintain momentum and public enthusiasm for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail's Bulloch model project, it is crucial to keep the public informed of the design and construction progress. PATH recommends that local leaders follow a communications schedule with four touch points with the public regarding the model project:

1. At the public meeting for adoption of the Georgia Hi-Lo Plan (and model project) by the Bulloch County Board of Commissioners;
2. At a public meeting to gather feedback on the 30% design of the model project;
3. At a public meeting to show how the feedback impacted the 100% design of the model project; and
4. At a public meeting to share the construction schedule and any traffic impacts.

## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL BULLOCH COUNTY LOOK AHEAD

When the last phase of the model project proceeds into design, the implementation team should begin planning for the extension of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail as the next step to completing a county-wide trail alignment. County leaders should engage key rural property owners with in-depth discussions with the goal of finding a cross-county alignment that would be acceptable to county residents.

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will be added to Bulloch County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan by stakeholders representing the City of Statesboro. The Plan is scheduled to be updated in 2024 and 2025, which will enable transportation leaders to leverage the outreach opportunity and put the Hi-Lo trail in a transportation context.

Future destinations of the Georgia Hi-Lo trail in Bulloch County will be planned with the support of county and local leadership and vetted with the community. PATH recommends that the Oliver Bridge Wildlife Management Area and the beautiful river lowlands in eastern Bulloch County be considered as a key destination. The WMA is relatively lightly used, and it could also act as a welcome overnight location for long-haul trail users on multi-day explorations of east central Georgia. Furthermore, given that there are only two crossings of the Ogeechee River useful to access Effingham County, and given the opportunities for extending the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail along the old Central of Georgia Railroad alignment, PATH strongly recommends that Bulloch County pursue a crossing near Georgia Highway 24.



*Oliver Bridge WMA is a destination for Georgia Hi-Lo in Bulloch County.*



# EFFINGHAM COUNTY

Effingham County is nestled between the Savannah River and the Ogeechee River – two of the longest rivers with the largest watersheds on the east coast of the United States. The terrain is flat and the soil sandy with large tracts of low-lying wet areas and wetlands – the highest point in the county is barely 138 feet above sea level.<sup>1</sup>



*Abandoned Central of Georgia Railroad right of way in Guyton.*

- 1 <https://www.peakbagger.com/peak.aspx?pid=23353>
- 2 Effingham County Parks and Recreation Plan (2023), p. 6.

Effingham County's population stood at 64,769 in the 2020 US Census, an increase of 24% since 2010 and 73% since 2000. The county is within the Savannah metropolitan area which has seen rapid economic expansion due to its port logistics and tourism industries. With a rapidly growing population and the demand for logistics-related industrial development, the county is focused on expanding infrastructure to keep up with development pressures. Parks and recreation and transportation are two areas of concentration. The county has recently completed a parks plan update and a Transportation Plan. These plans both reference the need for interconnecting bike and pedestrian paths and for improved access to nature and more opportunities for passive recreation.<sup>2</sup>

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is a relatively low-cost, high-impact way to increase Effingham's attractiveness to new residents and new businesses, as well as to improve the quality of life for existing residents. The Hi-Lo Trail will connect a number of Effingham County's recreational and educational assets – making bicycle and pedestrian access safer and more inviting for residents and visitors alike.

PATH-led trail planning efforts conducted in coordination with county stakeholders and members of the public identified key destinations in Effingham County that

could be served by a cross-county trail. These key destinations include schools, county parks and recreation facilities, the Honey Ridge Agricenter, and the towns of Guyton, Springfield, Egypt, and Meldrim.

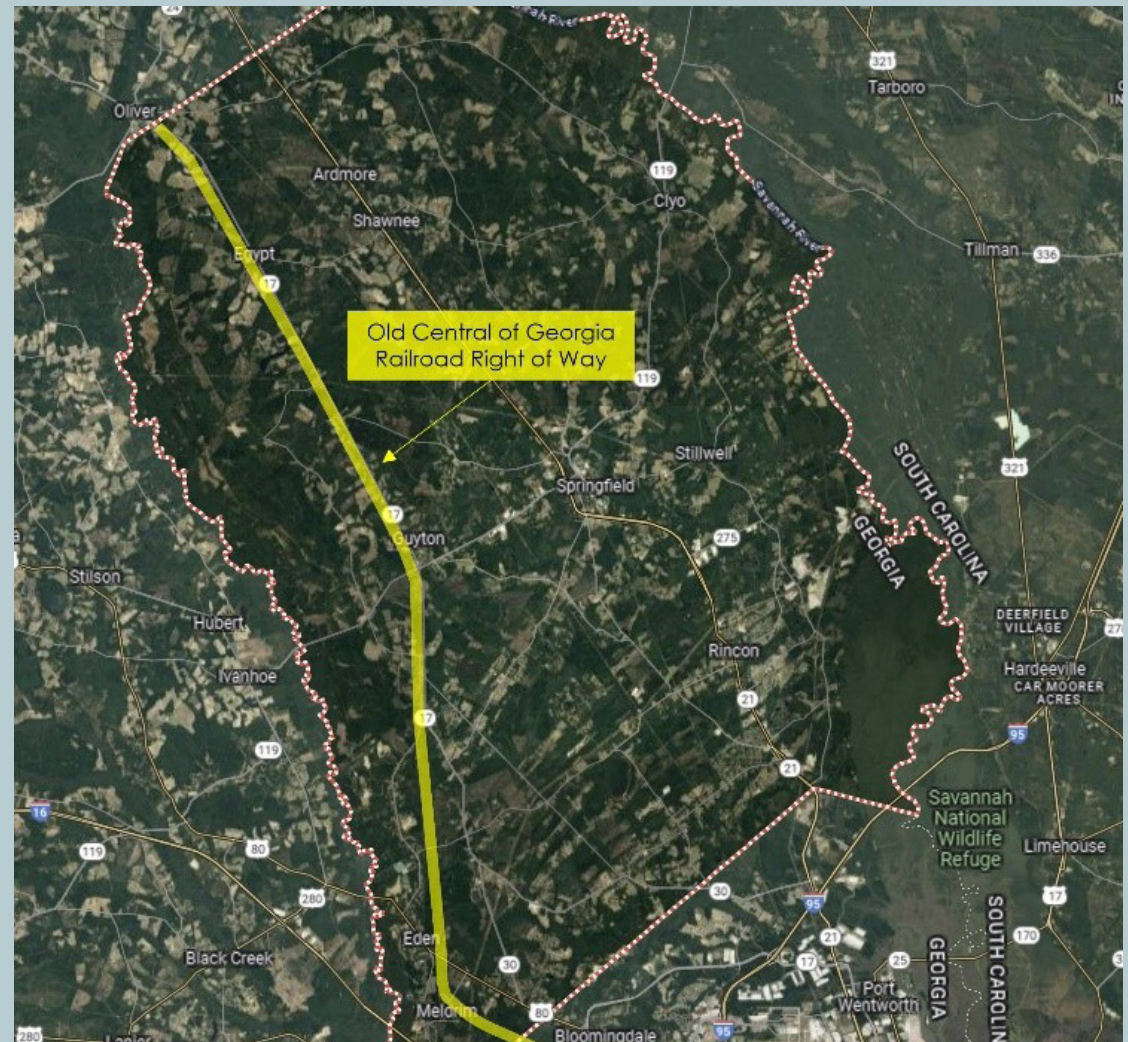


*Old caboose at existing Guyton trailhead.*

Connecting many of these key destinations, the old Central of Georgia Railroad right of way forms a line running north to south across the western side of the county. Abandoned in the 1960s when the railroad went out of business, today the alignment is primarily owned by the Southern Company – corporate parent of Georgia Power – which uses the right of way for local power transmission. The City of Guyton has used the portion of the old railroad alignment that it owns to build a recreational trail through the center of town and past Guyton Elementary School, extending nearly 0.75 miles from Gracen Road south to 3rd Avenue.



PATH recommends that Effingham County stakeholders, in collaboration with the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Initiative, begin discussions with Georgia Power's real estate division to determine the feasibility of a permanent easement or long-term property lease along the former railroad right of way. Railroad rights of way are advantageous for regional trails because they cover long distances and are typically well away from busy highways with fewer at-grade vehicular crossings. They have raised beds and bridge infrastructure that can sometimes be leveraged when building a trail, reducing costs and construction time. The most valuable characteristic from a trail planning perspective is that railroad rights of way are often miles-long, single-owner assets where negotiations with one entity can yield highly appealing, long-distance trails in natural settings. Alternatives capturing this same trail user experience would be impossible to achieve if negotiations had to occur with the dozens or hundreds of individual land owners along a similar alignment.



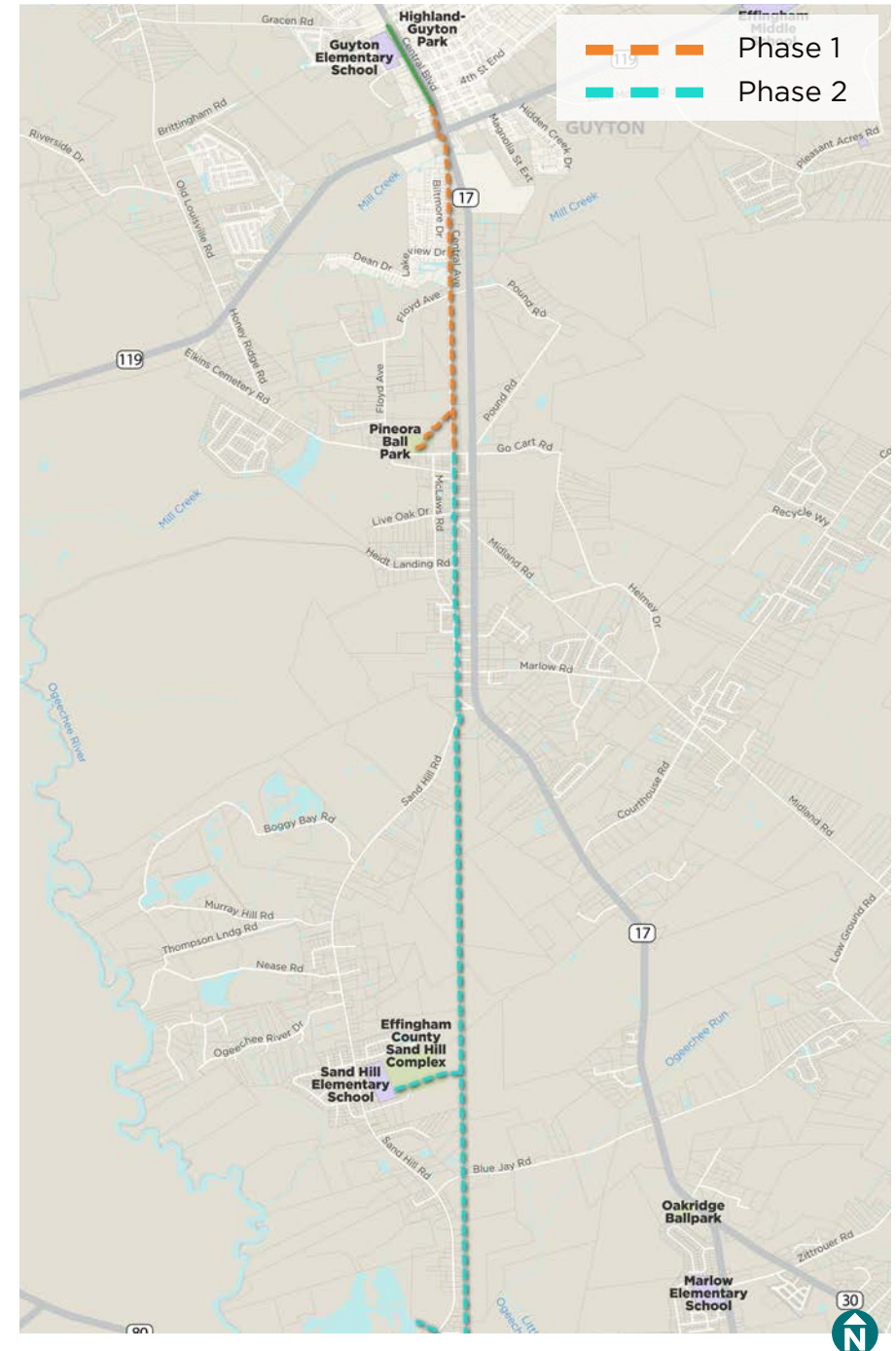
*Old Central of Georgia Railroad right of way of Effingham County*



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EFFINGHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT

The model project identified by PATH staff in collaboration with key county stakeholders and the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Initiative is an approximately 10.2-mile, two-phase, multi-use trail that provides connections to and between the City of Guyton, the county's Pineora Park and Ballfields, Effingham County Sand Hill Sports Complex and Elementary School, and the county's planned Atlas Reservoir Park.

Success for the Effingham County Model Project rests on achieving an agreement with Georgia Power regarding sharing the old railroad right of way for both power transmission and a trail. In summer 2023, PATH staff met with Georgia Power representatives, who expressed preliminary support for a trail if several considerations were met, and if company leadership approved the design. The representatives provided a document titled "General Guidelines for Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails on Georgia Power Transmission Rights of Way," which is included in the Appendix. These guidelines cover design and engineering details, such as how far the trail needs to be from transmission line infrastructure and noticing requirements for adjoining landowners. The Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative, in collaboration with Effingham County stakeholders, will continue to work with Georgia Power to align on a strategy to satisfy requirements so that they can begin building the model project.



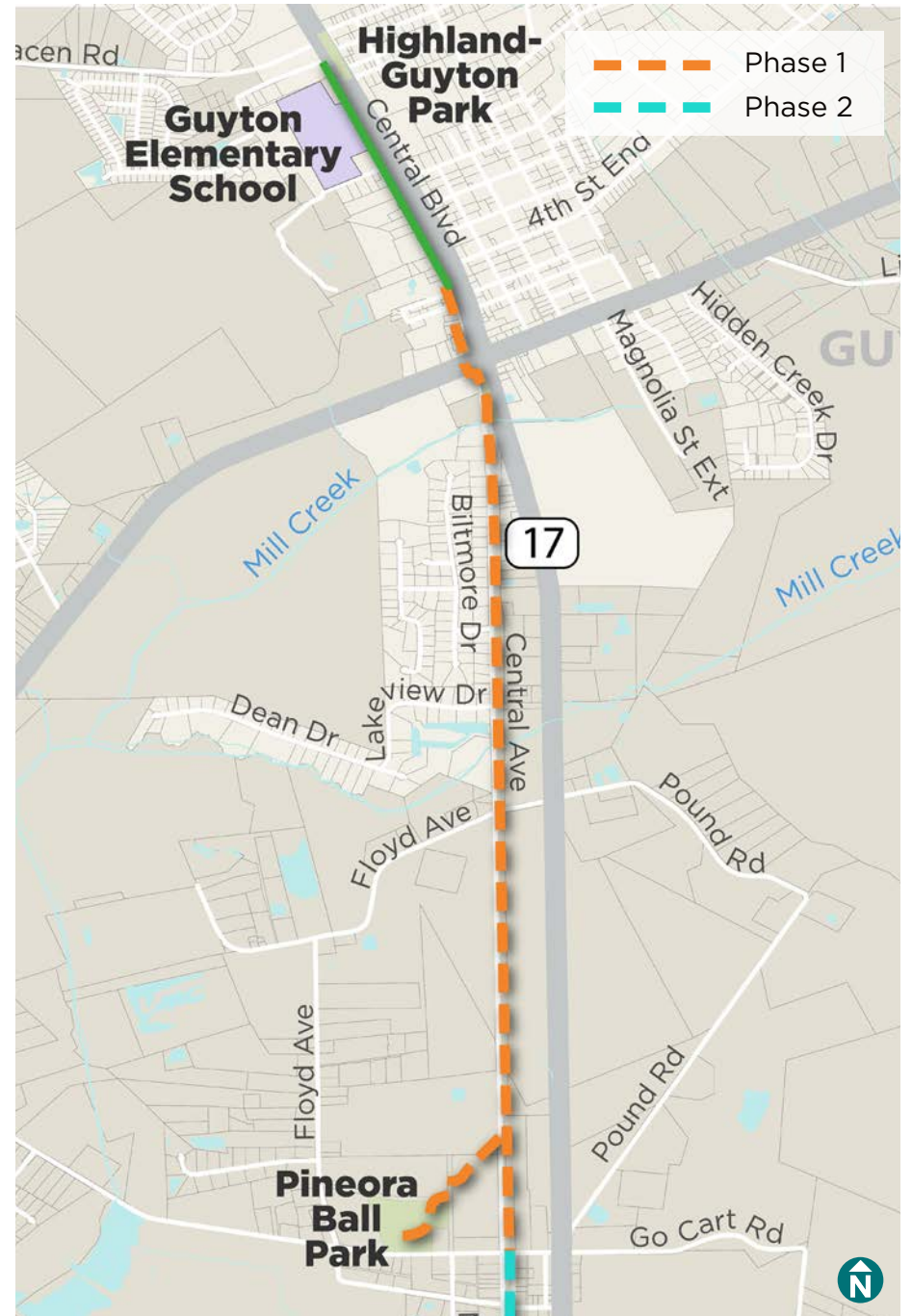
Effingham County Hi-Lo model project map.

## GEORGIA HI-LO EFFINGHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 1

Phase 1 is a 2.8-mile greenway trail that follows the old railroad right of way from Guyton to the Pineora Park and Ballfields. The Phase 1 Trail begins at the current terminus of the Guyton Trail on 3rd Avenue and Georgia Highway 17, where the city has developed a pleasant trailhead with parking, benches, and a restored train caboose. It continues south to the site of Ken's IGA on the northwest corner of GA-17 and GA-119 on public right of way related to Central Boulevard or West Central Boulevard. The trail crosses the entrance to Ken's IGA (which is slated for expansion) upgrading the existing cross-walk with paint and signage to clearly warn drivers of trail interaction. The trail proceeds along the grassy boulevard south to the existing pedestrian crossing on the east leg of the roundabout at GA-17 and GA-119. A user-activated pedestrian signal (or other safety treatment) will be installed to provide safe access for trail users.

The trail then turns east as a sidepath on the south side of the road back to the roundabout, where it turns south onto the railroad right of way to the east of and paralleling Central Avenue.

At about 1,500 feet south of the roundabout, the trail begins to interact with the Georgia Power transmission line. Assuming an agreement with Georgia Power can be reached, the Phase 1 Trail continues south following the power line, making a crossing with a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal at Halfway Road. The Phase 1 Trail then proceeds south for 1.25 miles, potentially on the Central Avenue roadbed, which may have been closed off by the county or along the Georgia Power transmission alignment. The Phase 1 Trail terminates at the intersection with Honey Ridge Road. A spur trail heads west to Pineora Park and Ballfields at a point along the mainline trail that is 1,300 feet north of the intersection with Honey Ridge Road. This spur terminates at the administration building in the middle of the park.



Map of Effingham County Phase 1 Trail.



## GEORGIA HI-LO EFFINGHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2

Phase 2 is a 7.4-mile extension of the trail continuing south on the Georgia Power transmission alignment. This long phase makes crossings of two types of roadways – low-traffic-volume, short connector streets and higher-traffic-volume longer roads. The low-volume streets do not warrant user-activated pedestrian traffic signals, but the higher-volume roads do require this additional infrastructure investment.

Proceeding south from Honey Ridge Road, the Phase 2 Trail continues for 2.0 miles through a suburban area where it makes uncontrolled crossings of Atlantic Avenue, 2nd Street, Pineora Estates Drive, Oak Street, and McIntyre Road. The trail makes controlled crossings of Midland Road, Central Avenue (near intersection with James Road), and Sand Hill Road (south of Old Marlow Road) with user-activated pedestrian traffic signals.

South of the Sand Hill Road intersection, the Phase 2 Trail proceeds through a natural area for approximately 3.5 miles until the intersection with Blue Jay Road and a user-activated pedestrian signal for safe crossing. A spur trail to the west at approximately 2.5 miles south of the Sand Hill Road intersection (or about 1 mile north of Blue Jay Road) provides trail users access to the Effingham County Sand Hill Sports Complex and Elementary School.

South of Blue Jay Road, the Phase 2 Trail proceeds along the Georgia Power transmission alignment to a point where an easement can be found on a parcel on the east side of Sand Hill Road that connects the trail across to the west side of Sand Hill Road and into Effingham County's planned park at the Atlas Reservoir. Depending on where the easement is identified, a sidepath may need to run along the east side of Sand Hill Road until it can access the county-owned parcel west of Sand Hill Road. For planning purposes only, a parcel has been identified that appears to contain a mining operation and that does not currently have a residence on it – 3187 Sand Hill Road.

If the county cannot find a willing landowner, a less valuable but still workable alternative would be to run a sidepath 0.2 miles on the south side of Blue Jay Road and another sidepath 1.2 miles on the east side of Sand Hill Road within the public right of way with a crossing onto county-owned property on the west side of Sand Hill Road across from 3113 Sand Hill Road with a user-activated pedestrian traffic signal.

Depending on the final design of the Atlas Reservoir Park, the Georgia Hi-Lo could function as a component of an internal trail system to the park or as a sidepath to an entrance driveway. The Phase 2 Trail should stop at a point where trail users have access to restrooms and bicycle parking.



*Georgia Power corridor following Central Avenue out of Guyton.*

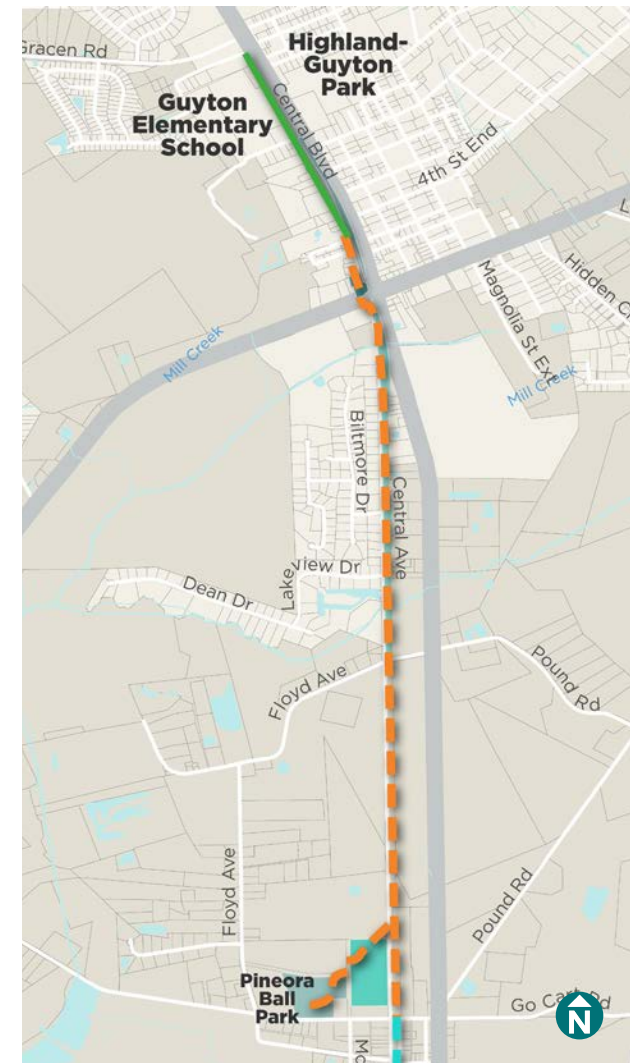
1 See <chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnbpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf>

## MODEL PROJECT – PARCEL INFORMATION

The information provided below is offered in draft format at the planning level. No decisions have been made and no aspect of the project will move forward without the full consent of the subject property owners. Under no circumstances does the county envision using eminent domain to acquire easements. Property owners who grant access for the public to use a trail are shielded from liability by Georgia law.<sup>1</sup> Further details regarding precise alignments and required easements will be determined in the design phase of the project.

Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
1	1	Public	South of Trailhead	NA	City of Guyton?
2	1	Private	101 W. Central Blvd	G0080006	Ken's Guyton IGA
3	1	Private	East of Central Ave	NA	Georgia Power
4	2	Private	South of Halfway Rd	NA	Georgia Power
5	2	Public	Central Ave	02960030B00	Effingham County BOC
6	2	Public	Honey Ridge Rd	02960074	Effingham County BOC

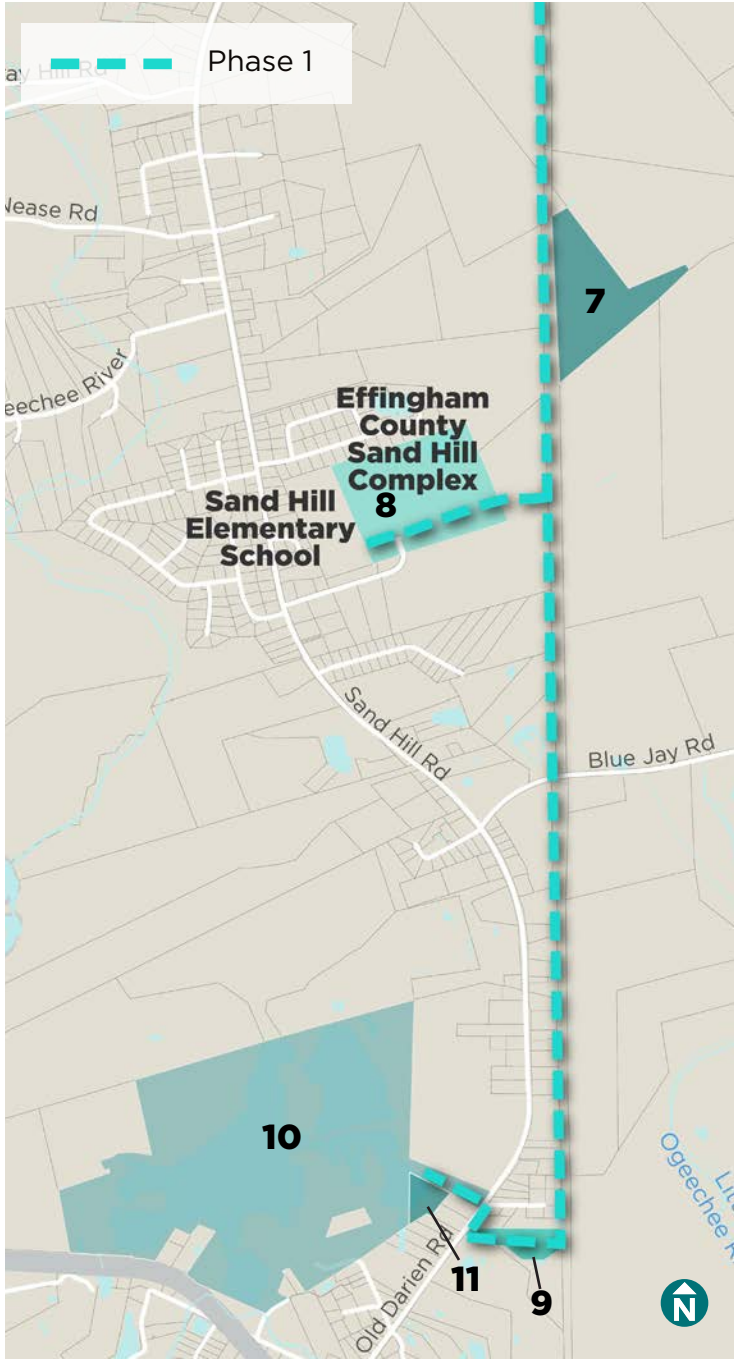
- — — Phase 1
- — — Phase 2



Effingham County Hi-Lo model project map.



Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
7	2	Private	Off Sand Hill Rd	02990076	CG Property Partners LLC
8	2	Private	295 Stagecoach Ave	03000037	Effingham County Rec Dep
9	2	Private	3187 Sand Hill Rd	03010041	David Adam Lindamood et al
10	2	Public	US Hwy 80	03010027	Effingham County BOC
11	2	Public	Sand Hill Rd	03010071	Effingham County BOC



Effingham County Hi-Lo model project map.

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EFFINGHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

The charts below summarize the preliminary cost estimates for the model project phases identified in the previous section. PATH recommends updating this cost estimate at every design interval to accommodate the change in cost over time. These cost estimates come with the following considerations:

- The cost for building a soft surface trail as an intermediate step towards full-length paving is offered as an alternative that lowers initial costs and enables more miles of trail to be brought on line sooner. Concrete is the strongly recommended long-term design solution both for access for people with disabilities and for substantially lower ongoing maintenance costs.
- The costs for public right-of-way, easement and property acquisition are not included.<sup>1</sup>
- Estimated P&E (Planning and Engineering) costs include surveying, design, and engineering for construction, permitting, bidding, and construction administration of the project.
- Estimated Construction Costs for a 10-foot wide trail are based on material and labor pricing from Fall 2023 using the trail design standards recommended in Chapter 4..
- Costs for lighting and security camera systems are not included.
- Trail maintenance operating costs are not included.

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Concrete)	Total Cost
1	3.1	\$216,000	\$3,474,000	\$3,690,000
2	7.9	\$313,000	\$8,397,000	\$8,710,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>\$529,000</b>	<b>\$11,871,000</b>	<b>\$12,400,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of construction with in one stage.*

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/Gravel)	Total First Stage Gravel	Marginal Cost of Second Stage Concrete	Long Run Final Cost
1	3.1	\$216,000	\$2,749,000	\$2,965,000	\$1,438,000	\$4,403,000
2	7.9	\$313,000	\$6,396,000	\$6,709,000	\$3,498,000	\$10,207,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>\$529,000</b>	<b>\$9,145,000</b>	<b>\$9,674,000</b>	<b>\$4,936,000</b>	<b>\$14,610,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of alternative construction construction method with intermediate soft surface trail.*

<sup>1</sup> PATH recommends that the Implementation Committee assess acquisition cost several months prior to the beginning of construction of each trail segment.



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EFFINGHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is an ambitious undertaking to build at least 211 miles of paved multi-use trails from Athens to Savannah and beyond. This trail planning effort has introduced the Effingham County community to the trail concepts and has generated some initial momentum that will need to be harnessed to bring the two-phase model project to life (and further advance the cause of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail).

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FORMATION

PATH recommends that the stakeholders who have helped shape the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail vision in Effingham County into a plan now stay on as founding members of the implementation team. Their first step will be to draw other committee members from the ranks of county staff, community leaders, outdoors people, and others to oversee the design and the construction of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Effingham County Model Project.

## FUNDING STRATEGY

The PATH team recommends that Effingham County develop a multi-year grant strategy including back-up plans for those times when grant applications are not successful. Well-thought-out local funding and grant strategies are highly attractive to governmental granting agencies and philanthropic donors. They form the basis of a successful public-private partnership that can be leveraged to maintain momentum and keep the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Effingham County Model Project on track until all 10.2 miles are completed and Effingham County residents can start to experience the benefits of trails.

## LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Some examples of local funding include:

- City/County budget allocations for parks, transportation, or sewer and water
- Bond referenda
- Sales surtax funds
- Hotel-Motel taxes
- Development impact fees
- In-kind products and services
- Philanthropic grants
- Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST)

## STATE OF GEORGIA FUNDING SOURCES

- Some examples of state funding include:
- Special project allocation
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)
- DNR Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

## DONATIONS

Foundations and generous individuals are often supportive of trail infrastructure especially if the benefits to the community are clearly spelled out. Additionally, fundraisers engaging smaller donors can yield substantial money to invest in design and engineering and eventually construction.

## FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prioritizes and distributes federal transportation funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program
- Federal Transit Administration Capital Funds (FTA)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program) (TA)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Safe Routes to School
- Safe Streets and Roads for All

## HIGH-LEVEL SCHEDULE

The PATH Foundation recommends that the 10.2-mile, two-phase model project connecting the City of Guyton to Atlas Reservoir Park be completed within six years as broken down below:

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Building County-wide Support						
Phase 1: Design & Permit						
Phase 1: Construction						
Phase 2: Design & Permit						
Phase 2: Construction						

To ensure progress while understanding that staff time is a finite resource, PATH recommends that as the first phase of the model project shifts out of design and into construction, the next phase immediately goes into design. This reduces the lag time between completion of the first phase and completion of subsequent phases while promoting an efficient division of labor and limiting the impact on staff workloads.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

To maintain momentum and public enthusiasm for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail's Effingham model project, it is crucial to keep the public informed of the design and construction progress. PATH recommends that local leaders follow a communications schedule with four touch points with the public regarding the model project:

1. At the public meeting for adoption of the Georgia Hi-Lo Plan (and model project) by the Effingham County Board of Commissioners;
2. At a public meeting to gather feedback on the 30% design of the model project;
3. At a public meeting to show how the feedback impacted the 100% design of the model project; and
4. At a public meeting to share the construction schedule and any traffic impacts.



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL EFFINGHAM COUNTY LOOK AHEAD

When the last phase of the model project proceeds into design, the implementation team should begin planning for the extension of the Georgia Hi-Lo as the next step to completing a county-wide trail alignment. County leaders should continue to engage Georgia Power Company as well as key rural property owners with in-depth discussions with the goal of finding a cross-county alignment that would be acceptable to county residents.

Future destinations of the Georgia Hi-Lo trail in Effingham County will be planned with the support of county and local leadership and vetted with the community. A key consideration will be the crossing of the Ogeechee River. There are currently two road bridges that connect Effingham County to Bulloch County – GA Highway 24 that crosses just north of the county border to Oliver and GA Highway 119 that crosses to the central part of the county to Guyton.

As can be seen in the photos at left, neither of the bridges is bicycle or pedestrian friendly. Georgia DOT has no plans to change the design of either bridge for the foreseeable future. A safe river crossing is essential for the viability of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail as a regional trail connecting longer distances for the purposes of tourism and recreation. A trail from Savannah to Statesboro that passes through Guyton and uses the GA-24 crossing would be approximately 59 miles long whereas one crossing GA-119 (and potentially avoiding Guyton) would be approximately 56 miles long. But the distance matters less than the experience – and the alignment options in western Effingham may mean that a nicer trail experience is easier to achieve.

PATH looked briefly at two potentially feasible locations for setting a separate bicycle and pedestrian bridge across the Ogeechee River – one near the Oliver Bridge Wildlife Management Area south of the existing GA-24 bridge and another further south along Old River Road, that could access a City of Guyton-owned parcel on the east side of the river. Further evaluation of these pedestrian-bicycle bridges should

be conducted prior to settling on Georgia Hi-Lo alignments in either Effingham County or Bulloch County.

Another consideration for future Georgia Hi-Lo Trail planning in Effingham County relates to the willingness of Georgia Power to work with county leadership and staff on building a trail along the western side of the county. If a good working relationship is established during the first two phases of trail building, Effingham County may seek to continue the trail building efforts on that alignment further to the north. Georgia Power is still determining the extent of its ownership of the old railroad right of way between Guyton and Oliver.

To the south of the Phase 2 Trail terminus at Atlas Reservoir Park, a future phase should consider extending the trail along the old railroad right of way as far south as possible into the Town of Meldrim and beyond and into Chatham County, where it can link up with efforts at trail building in the cities of Bloomingdale and Pooler (see the Chatham County section for more details on this alignment).



*Existing conditions of GA-119 bridge over the Ogeechee River near Guyton.*

# CHATHAM COUNTY

Chatham County is the eastern terminus of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail and is by far the most populous and urbanized of the counties the trail passes through. The population of the county stood at 295,291 in the 2020 US Census – a gain of 11.4% over 2010. The county has thrived economically due to its strong tourism base and its logistics assets that make it the fourth busiest port in the United States. Industrial development is occurring at a rapid pace, especially in the western part of the county, where land is suitable for warehouse locations and other logistics-related development. Residential areas are also expanding rapidly in all areas of the county.

Unlike Georgia Hi-Lo Trail counties to the west, Chatham has large wetland tracts and land that is drained by canals. These canals represent an early 19th century transportation solution that was later replaced by the railroads and later by the highways. This transportation history is clearly visible in Chatham County. Unfortunately, the transportation assets were not planned with pedestrians and bicyclists in mind, and the massive character of the transportation infrastructure tends to cut neighborhoods off from one another – isolating some communities and overburdening others. Much of the county outside of the historic core of old Savannah until recently, for example, had relatively few sidewalks and almost no bicycle infrastructure.

With these infrastructure characteristics as a backdrop, the PATH team and Chatham County stakeholders met to evaluate alignments for a cross-county trail and to select a model project. Through a series of planning exercises, stakeholders and the public agreed that the goals of the county involve bringing the community together in safe and healthy ways that are also conscious of the impacts of intense economic development, such as residential displacement and inequitable health and economic outcomes.

County stakeholders are very supportive of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail as a relatively low-cost, high-impact strategy to improve the quality of life for existing and future residents. When

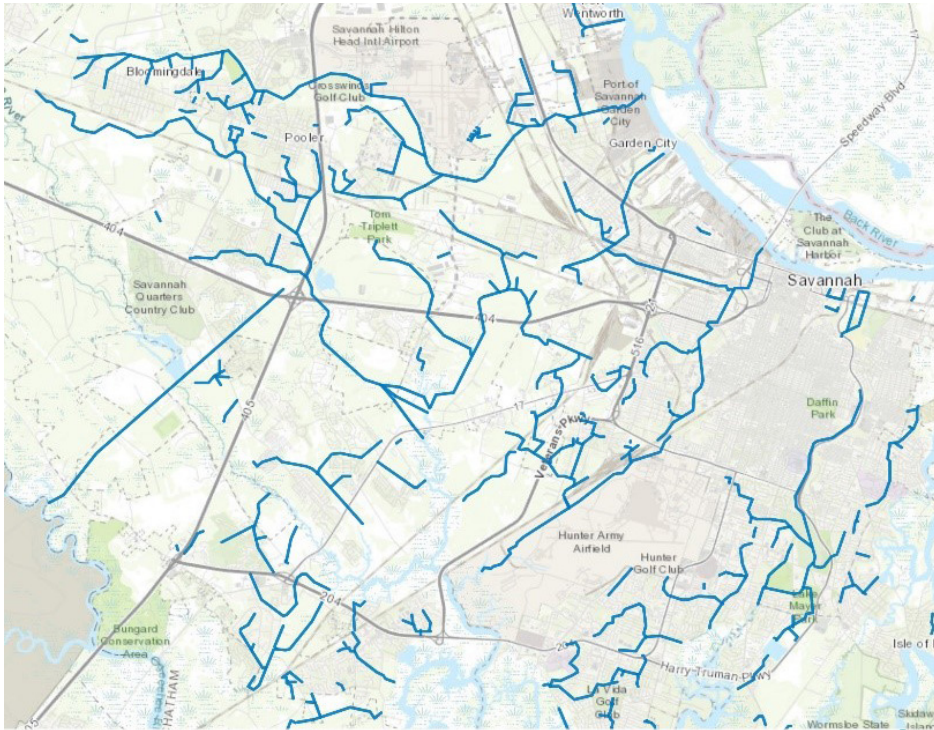
complete, the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail intends to connect a number of recreational assets in the county – making bicycle and pedestrian access safer and more inviting and more useful for those seeking alternatives to driving.



*Existing trail near Bloomingdale Elementary School.*

Chatham County and its city partners have conducted extensive bicycle and pedestrian planning that the PATH team used as a base in its evaluation of cross-county alignment options. The 2016 Chatham County Greenway Implementation Study, the 2019 Chatham County Parks and Recreation Plan, the 2020 update to the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, the 2022 Savannah Vision Zero Action Plan, and the 2023 SR26/US-80 Corridor Study all provided useful inputs and context for trail alignment evaluation and to get a broader perspective on the values of the community as they relate to trails.





*Historic Canals in Chatham County.*

The PATH team led a planning exercise, in collaboration with county and city stakeholders and members of the public, that identified key destinations in Chatham County to be served by a cross-county trail. These key destinations include Tybee Island, historic Savannah, the Enmarket Arena, Waterworks Building developments, Tom Triplett Park, and commercial districts in Bloomingdale and Pooler.

Initially, the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail had referred to an alignment as “Athens to Savannah.” During the Chatham County planning exercise, “Savannah” was defined to mean Tybee Island as the logical terminus for a regional trail – and key destination for residents and visitors alike. City and county planners have long dreamed of a bicycle-pedestrian route to connect Savannah to Tybee Island. Recently, Georgia DOT plans have offered hope of fulfilling this goal with the addition of a multi-use sidepath in its plans to replace the US-80 bridges crossing the marshes and islands, creating relatively safe bicycle and pedestrian access

in the missing links where it has been lacking. The timeline and details of this project are provided in the Appendix.

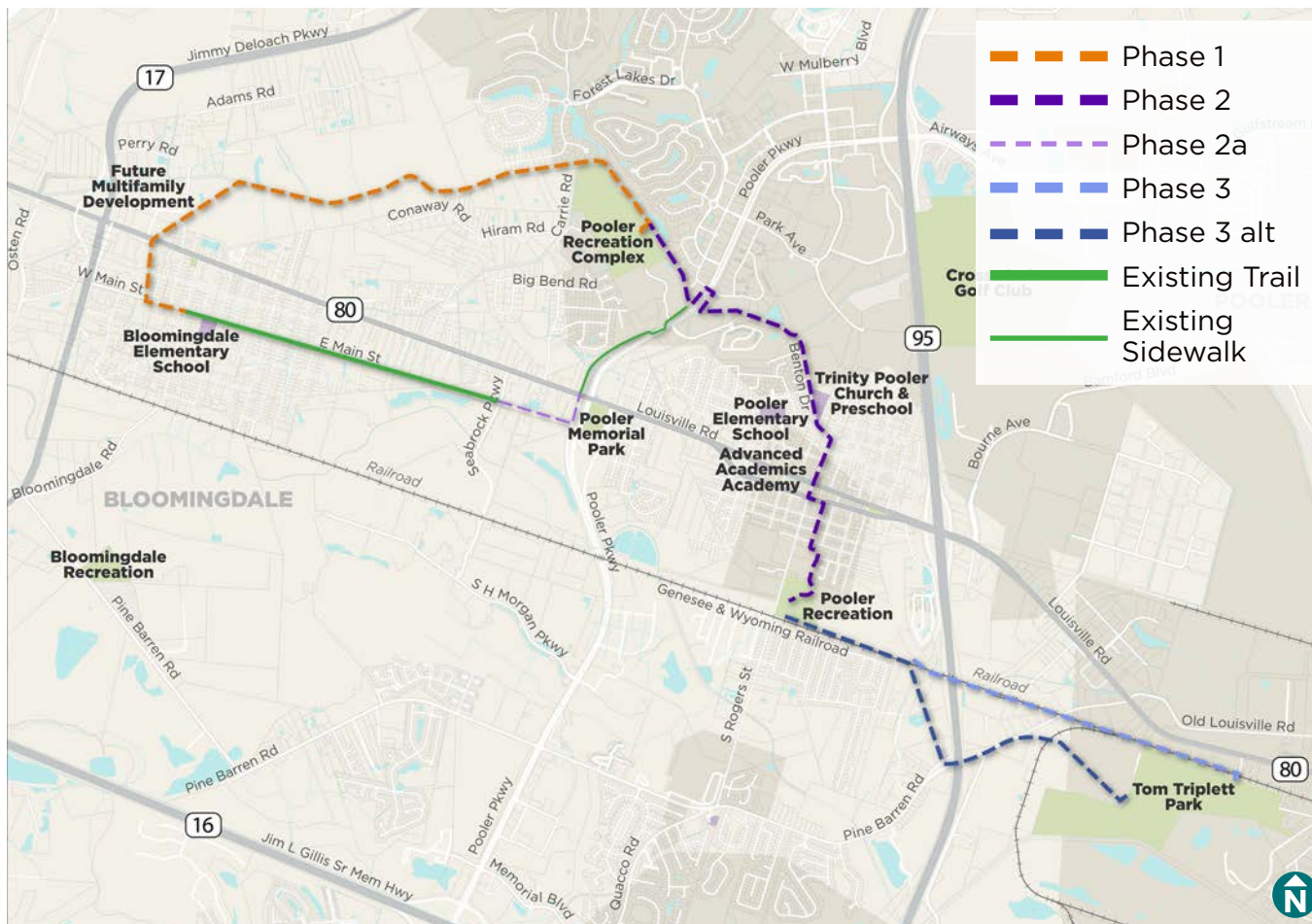
During its analysis, PATH focused on the network of canals in Chatham County built in the early to mid-1800s, that today offer unique opportunities for multi-use trails. From a trail planning perspective, canals function similarly to railroads as long, single-owner assets in natural settings that yield quality trail experiences and whose infrastructure can be leveraged to build trails more affordably. While Chatham County owns a majority of the canal assets, the canals themselves are not always continuous, with disruptions caused by railroads, highways, and more recently, industrial and residential developments. Long stretches are still available, however, and form the basis of PATH’s recommendations for a model project that supports the longer-term vision for a trail connecting across Chatham County from west to east, terminating on Tybee Island.



*Pipemaker's Canal near Pooler.*

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL CHATHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT

The model project identified by PATH staff, in collaboration with key city and county stakeholders, and the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Initiative is an approximately 9.0-mile, three-phase, multi-use trail that provides connections to and between the cities of Bloomingdale and Pooler. This includes two of Pooler's recreation centers, the West Chatham YMCA, the Pooler City Hall, and several existing and forthcoming residential developments. The proposed model project alignment terminates at Tom Triplett Park – identified as a major destination in western Chatham County. The model project relies heavily on the county's canal infrastructure, including the Pipemaker's Canal and some of its tributaries. There are a few on-street sections as either sidepaths or calm streets, and one section with an alternative that would depend on an agreement with Genesee & Wyoming Railroad for access alongside an active rail line.



Chatham County Hi-Lo model project map.



## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL CHATHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 1

Phase 1 is a 3.3-mile greenway trail built primarily along the Pipemaker's Canal and its tributaries. The Phase 1 Trail begins as a 1,200-foot sidepath extending the existing Bloomingdale Trail westward on the north side of West Main Street, using public right of way. At the intersection with the Pipemaker's Canal (see the image to the right), the trail turns north and becomes a greenway using the canal maintenance access road. At the intersection with US-80, the Phase 1 Trail makes an at-grade crossing in conjunction with a new intersection anticipated to be built to accommodate the new multi-family development on the north side of US-80. An alternative would be to build a bicycle and pedestrian bridge over US-80 and take the opportunity to install a lighted sign welcoming travelers to Bloomingdale.

On the north side of US-80, the greenway continues along the west side of canal right of way and then crosses to the east/south side of the canal at Adams Road, where it follows the maintenance road to the Pooler Recreation Complex on Preston Stokes Drive, where the Phase 1 Trail terminates. The entire length of the canal is under Chatham County jurisdiction, with the exception of a 1,200-foot section that will require easements from two property owners (see parcel detail in the next section).



*Pipemaker's Canal at Main Street in Bloomingdale.*

## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL CHATHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 2

Phase 2 is a 2.8-mile trail consisting of segments of greenway, sidepath, and calm street (where calm street implies shared bicycle and vehicular activity with no new infrastructure). The Phase 2 Trail begins as a continuation of the Phase 1 greenway adjacent to the Pooler Recreation Complex off of Preston Stokes Drive. It follows the maintenance road on the south side of the canal to Pooler Parkway, where the Phase 2 Trail joins the Pooler Parkway sidepath north to Pipemaker's Circle, where the trail makes an at-grade crossing of Pooler Parkway at the traffic-signal-controlled intersection with existing pedestrian crossing infrastructure. On the east side of Pooler Parkway, the trail proceeds south on public right of way and an easement from the entity controlling the public storage facility before rejoining the Pipemaker's Canal right of way and proceeding east again as a greenway. At Benton Drive, the greenway trail veers to the south, requiring three easements to create a greenway and/or a sidepath: (1) a town-house developer, (2) a company controlling the industrial site fronting the east side of Benton Drive, and (3) a church. If such easements cannot be acquired, the alternative is to transition the greenway into a calm street along Benton Drive, where bicyclists and pedestrians share the very low-volume roadway with vehicles.

At the southern end of Benton Drive the greenway/sidepath crosses North Newton Street back onto canal property for approximately 500 feet. At Rogers Street, the Phase 2 Trail turns to the south and transitions to a shared-use calm street following Rogers Street to the signal-controlled intersection with US-80 (one-way westbound). The trail then becomes a cycle-track (separated bike lane on the street and sidewalk for pedestrians) for one block on South Rogers Street. The trail then uses the existing pedestrian crossing infrastructure to get to the south side of the highway (one-way eastbound), at which point it heads east using public right of way to create a sidepath on the south side of the highway for one block.

The Phase 2 sidepath trail turns off of the highway right of way onto South Morgan Street as a shared use calm street for one block. South of the intersection with Tietgen Street, the trail repurposes a "paper street" (publicly owned right of way but no paved infrastructure) to become a greenway crossing East Whatley and East Mell Streets.

South of East Mell Street, to continue as a greenway, the Phase 2 Trail would require two easements (described below) before entering City of Pooler-owned property serving as a recreation facility on South Rogers Street. The Phase 2 Trail should terminate in the city parcel near a parking area with bicycle racks designed in a way that the recreation center serves as a trailhead.



*Pipemaker's Canal at Pooler Parkway Sidepath.*



## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL CHATHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT PHASE 3

Phase 3 is a 2.9-mile extension of the Hi-Lo Trail that picks up where the Phase 2 Trail ends at the Pooler Recreation Center trailhead on South Rogers Street and continues to Chatham County's Tom Triplett Park – a key regional recreational destination.

The Phase 3 Trail begins on Packer Drive in the Pooler Recreation facility on South Rogers Street at the previously mentioned trailhead and proceeds east approximately 3,500 feet through the city-owned parcel, skirting the ballfields to the south and bridging a drainage canal in the middle of forested area before interacting with railroad right of way controlled by the Genesee & Wyoming Railroad.

The most likely scenario, given the approvals required from the railroad, would be to cross the railroad right of way either at grade (preferred) or by building a bridge with a southside landing, requiring easements for a greenway on two privately owned parcels (same owner; see below) between the railroad and Pine Barren Road. The Phase 3 Trail would make a crossing on the eastern leg of the three-way intersection with user-activated pedestrian crossing traffic signal to a sidepath along the south side of Pine Barren Road to an access road into the Georgia Ports Authority parcel immediately west of Tom Triplett Park. The County may wish to acquire a portion of this parcel for a park expansion that could also serve the needs of the Hi-Lo Trail. Within that parcel is an active rail spur that would require an at-grade crossing and then a direct line greenway to the east side of the main lagoon. This plan assumes that the at-grade crossing could be accommodated. If an at-grade crossing cannot be accommodated, an alternative would be to add approximately 1.1 miles to the greenway trail by following along the west side of the track until reaching the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal, where an underpass could also serve as a trail crossing for a trail alignment that would end at the new parking area and restroom facility (the southwest corner of the park).

A Phase 3 alternative scenario would be for the City of Pooler, Chatham County and Georgia Hi-Lo staff to negotiate a lease or temporary easement for a 20-foot-wide strip approximately 1.7

miles long on the north side of the active rail line ending at the entrance road to Tom Triplett Park. This would create a valuable greenway connection that follows the rail line underneath I-95; stakeholders should be aware of the significant negotiation effort likely required to make this happen, which would enable travel in a straight line between Pooler's Recreation Center and the County's signature westside park. In other situations where trails parallel active railways, a fence is sometimes required to separate the public from the active railroad – whether or not this is required, and if so, the extent and design of such a fence would be determined in negotiation with the Genesee & Wyoming Railroad. At Tom Triplett Park Drive, the Phase 3 Alternate turns south and crosses the railroad at the existing railroad crossing. The Phase 3 Alternate terminates at the park's visitors center, where existing parking and restrooms make for a good stopping point.



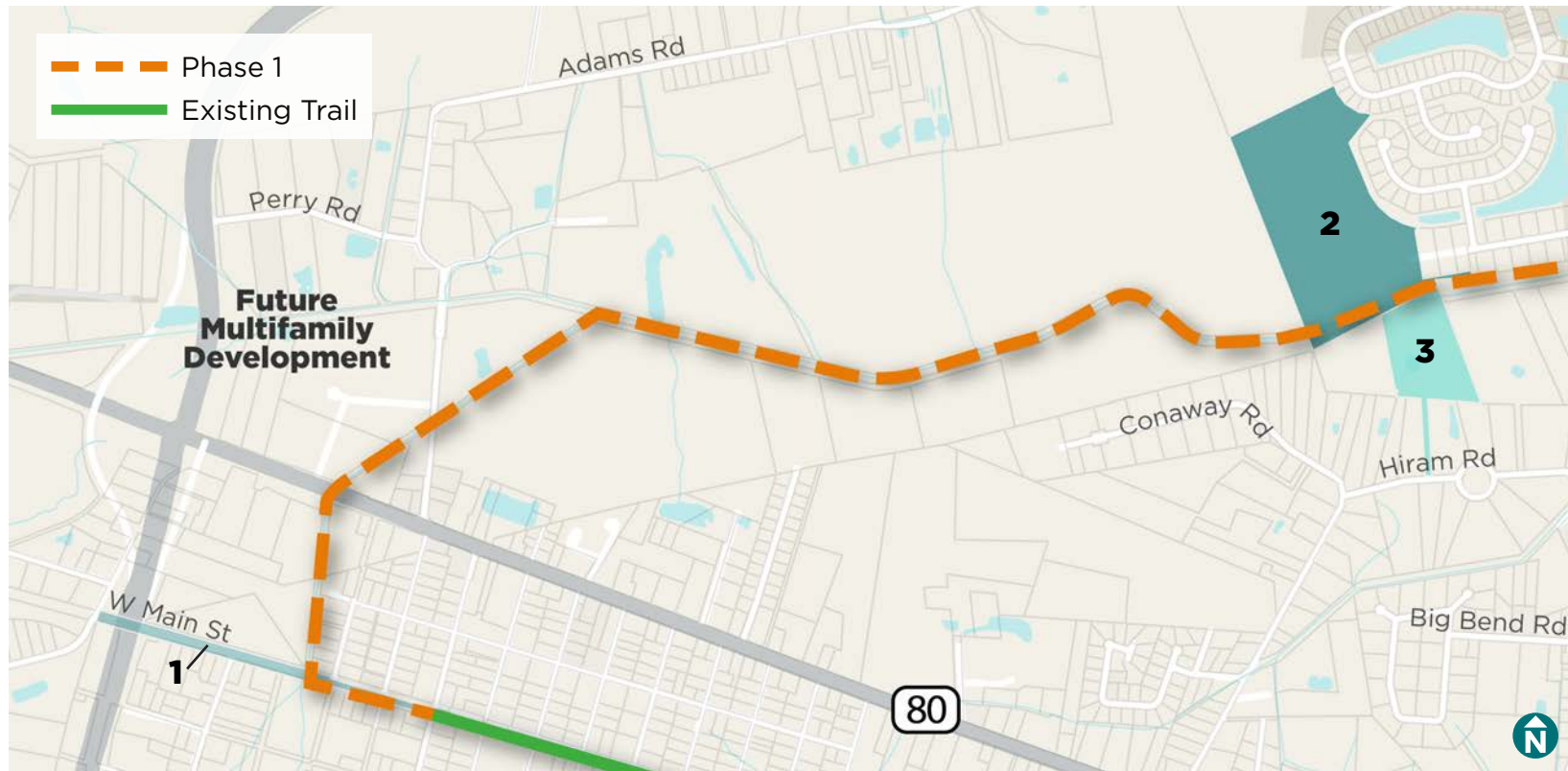
*The recreation center at S Rogers Street in Pooler.*

Image Source: Yonnie L., 2023. Accessed via [https://www.yelp.com/biz\\_photos/pooler-recreation-park-pooler-2?select=-NoO5EqfYbJN7wf5TGHE8Q](https://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/pooler-recreation-park-pooler-2?select=-NoO5EqfYbJN7wf5TGHE8Q)

## MODEL PROJECT – PARCEL INFORMATION

The information provided below is offered in draft format at the planning level. No decisions have been made and no aspect of the project will move forward without the full consent of the subject property owners. Under no circumstances does the county envision using eminent domain to acquire easements. Property owners who grant access for the public to use a trail are shielded from liability by Georgia law.<sup>1</sup> Further details regarding precise alignments and required easements will be determined in the design phase of the project.

Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
1	1	Public	Walnut St	80010N02002	City of Bloomingdale
2	1	Private	Pooler Pkwy	5101401149	Heron Crest Developers Inc.
3	1	Private	14 Hiram Rd	8001003002	Simon and Katherine Phillips

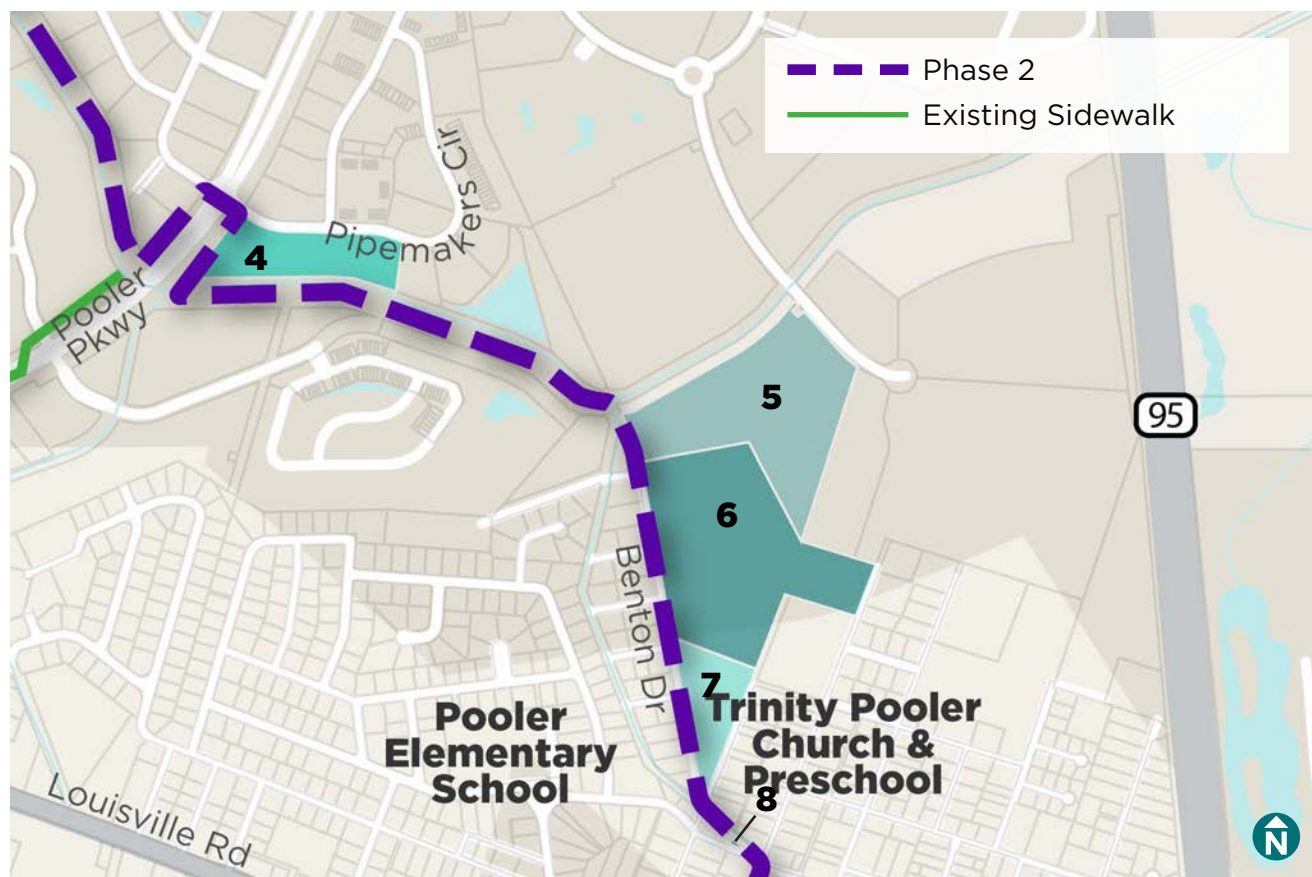


Chatham County Hi-Lo model project map.

<sup>1</sup> See [chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnbpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf](https://chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnbpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://rivercenter.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Landowner-Liability-2009.pdf)



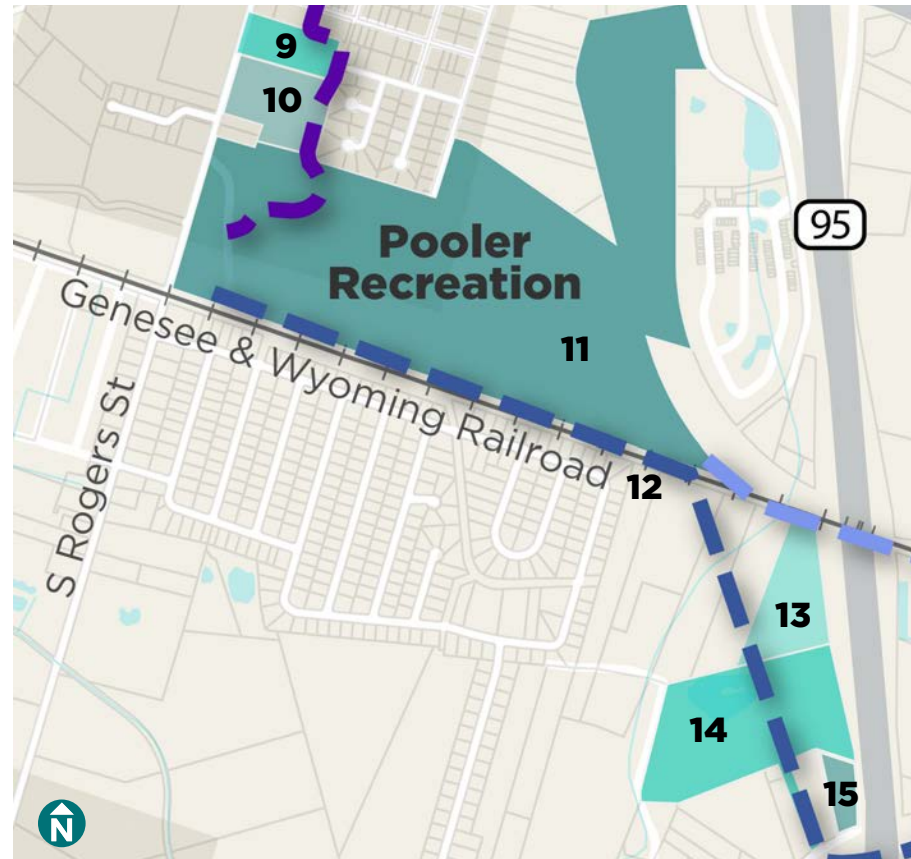
Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
4	2	Private	146 Pipemaker's Cir	50017B06019	PS Southeast Two LLC
5	2	Private	22 Naples Ln	50017D03009	Dream Finders Homes LLC
6	2	Private	Benton Dr	5001701034	SGLRP, LLC
7	2	Private	302 Benton Dr	5001001001	Trinity United Methodist Church
8	2	Private	Holly St	50006 05002	Holly Rogers



Chatham County Hi-Lo model project map.

Key	Phase	Ownership	Address	Parcel ID	Owner
9	2	Private	508 South Rogers St	50005 19002A	508 S Pooler LLC
10	2	Private	Pooler Crossroad	50009 01017	Harold Clifton Gracen
11	2, 3	Public	S Rogers St	50009 01019	City of Pooler
12	3	Private	Unknown	Unknown	Genesee & Wyoming Railroad
13	3	Public			
14	3 (alt)	Private	Pine Barren Rd	51011 02033	James Murray
15	3 (alt)	Private	Pine Barren Rd	51011 02015A	James Murray
16	3 (alt)	Private	Pine Barren Rd	51011 02032	James Murray

- Phase 2
- Phase 3
- Phase 3a



Chatham County Hi-Lo model project map.



# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL CHATHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

The charts below summarize the preliminary cost estimates for the model project phases identified in the previous section. PATH recommends updating this cost estimate at every design interval to accommodate the change in cost over time. These cost estimates come with the following considerations:

- The cost for building a soft surface trail as an intermediate step towards full-length paving is offered as an alternative that lowers initial costs and enables more miles of trail to be brought on line sooner. Concrete is the strongly recommended long-term design solution both for access for people with disabilities and for substantially lower ongoing maintenance costs.
- The costs for public right-of-way, easement and property acquisition are not included.<sup>1</sup>
- Estimated P&E (Planning and Engineering) costs include surveying, design, and engineering for construction, permitting, bidding, and construction administration of the project.
- Estimated Construction Costs for a 10-foot wide trail are based on material and labor pricing from Fall 2023 using the trail design standards recommended in Chapter 4..
- Costs for lighting and security camera systems are not included.
- Trail maintenance operating costs are not included.

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Concrete)	Total Concrete from Beginning
1	3.4	\$266,000	\$3,869,000	\$4,135,000
2	2.8	\$270,000	\$3,442,000	\$3,712,000
3	2.5	\$344,000	\$4,295,000	\$4,639,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>\$880,000</b>	<b>\$11,606,000</b>	<b>\$12,486,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of construction with in one stage.*

Phase	Mileage	P&E	Construction (w/ Gravel)	Total First Stage Gravel	Marginal Cost of Second Stage Concrete	Long Run Final Cost
1	3.4	\$266,000	\$2,898,000	\$3,164,000	\$1,867,000	\$5,031,000
2	2.8	\$270,000	\$2,757,000	\$3,027,000	\$1,238,000	\$4,265,000
3	2.5	\$344,000	\$3,179,000	\$3,523,000	\$1,278,000	\$4,801,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>\$880,000</b>	<b>\$8,834,000</b>	<b>\$9,714,000</b>	<b>\$4,383,000</b>	<b>\$14,097,000</b>

*Preliminary cost estimate of alternative construction construction method with intermediate soft surface trail.*

<sup>1</sup> PATH recommends that the Implementation Committee assess acquisition cost several months prior to the beginning of construction of each trail segment.

# GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL CHATHAM COUNTY MODEL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is an ambitious undertaking to build at least 211 miles of paved multi-use trails from Athens to Savannah and beyond. This trail planning effort has introduced the Chatham County community to the trail concepts and has generated some initial momentum that will need to be harnessed to bring the two-phase model project (and thus the rest of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail) to life.

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FORMATION

PATH recommends that the stakeholders who have helped shape the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail vision in Chatham County into a plan now stay on as founding members of the implementation team. Their first step will be to draw other committee members from the ranks of county staff, community leaders, outdoors people, and others to oversee the design and the construction of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Chatham County Model Project.

## FUNDING STRATEGY

The PATH team recommends that Chatham County and city partners develop a multi-year grant strategy including back-up plans for those times when grant applications are not successful. Well-thought-out local funding and grant strategies are highly attractive to governmental granting agencies and to philanthropic donors. They form the basis of a successful public-private partnership that can be leveraged to maintain momentum and keep the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Chatham County Model Project on track until all 9.0 miles are completed and Chatham County residents can start to experience for themselves the benefits of trails.

## LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Some examples of local funding include:

- City/County budget allocations for parks, transportation, or sewer and water
- Bond referenda
- Sales surtax funds
- Hotel-Motel taxes
- Development impact fees
- In-kind products and services
- Philanthropic grants
- Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST)

## STATE OF GEORGIA FUNDING SOURCES

- Some examples of state funding include:
- Special project allocation
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)
- DNR Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

## DONATIONS

Foundations and generous individuals are often supportive of trail infrastructure especially if the benefits to the community are clearly spelled out. Additionally, fundraisers engaging smaller donors can yield substantial money to invest in design and engineering and eventually construction.

## FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prioritizes and distributes federal transportation funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program
- Federal Transit Administration Capital Funds (FTA)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)
- Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (formerly Transportation Alternatives Program) (TA)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Safe Routes to School
- Safe Streets and Roads for All



## HIGH-LEVEL SCHEDULE

The PATH Foundation recommends that the 9.0-mile, three-phase model project connecting the City of Bloomingdale to Tom Triplett Park via Pooler be completed within seven years as broken down below:

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Building County-wide Support							
Phase 1: Design & Permit							
Phase 1: Construction							
Phase 2: Design & Permit							
Phase 2: Construction							
Phase 3: Design & Permit							
Phase 3: Construction							

To ensure progress while understanding that staff time is a finite resource, PATH recommends that as the first phase of the model project shifts out of design and into construction, the next phase immediately goes into design. This reduces the lag time between completion of the first phase and completion of subsequent phases while promoting an efficient division of labor and limiting the impact on staff workloads.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

To maintain momentum and public enthusiasm for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail's Chatham model project, it is crucial to keep the public informed of the design and construction progress. PATH recommends that local leaders follow a communications schedule with four touch points with the public regarding the model project:

1. At the public meeting for adoption of the Georgia Hi-Lo Plan (and model project) by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners;
2. At a public meeting to gather feedback on the 30% design of the model project;
3. At a public meeting to show how the feedback impacted the 100% design of the model project; and
4. At a public meeting to share the construction schedule and any traffic impacts.

## GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL CHATHAM COUNTY LOOK AHEAD

When the last phase of the model project proceeds into design, the implementation team should begin planning for the extension of the Georgia Hi-Lo as the next step to completing a county-wide trail alignment. County leaders should continue to engage key stakeholders, such as the Savannah Airport Authority and the Georgia Ports Authority, as well as various railroads (e.g., Norfolk Southern west of Bloomingdale and east of Meldrim or Genesee & Wyoming near Tom Triplett Park) to ascertain what is acceptable regarding a county-wide trail. The Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative, county leaders and stakeholders should also maintain contact City of Savannah, Tide-to-Town, and the Georgia DOT regarding various roadway and transportation projects that could be leveraged to advance the cause of trail planning in Chatham County. Throughout these processes, Georgia Hi-Lo should be proactive in maintaining communication with members of the community to keep them informed of progress and to report on any issues or opportunities that may arise.



*Tom Triplett Park at in Pooler.*

*Image Source: Chatham Parks and Recreation.*

*Accessed via <https://www.homes.com/property/573-governor-treutlen-cir-pooler-ga/f6wcs6z39qpxc/>*





# **4 DESIGN STANDARDS**




# BRANDING STANDARDS

Utilizing the existing colors, fonts, and shapes seen in the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail logo is the key to keeping a recognizable brand across multiple counties. This chapter explains how elements in the existing logo are utilized in the branding and signage design. It also details the standards that all Georgia Hi-Lo trail signage should follow.




## COLORS

### BACKGROUND




#221f20  
R:35 G:31 B:32  
C:70 M:67 Y:64 K:74

### SUN




#fdb714  
R:253 G:183 B:20  
C:0 M:31 Y:100 K:0

### SKY, LANDSCAPE, TAGLINE DOTS




#007378  
R:0 G:115 B:120  
C:0 M:31 Y:100 K:0

### LANDSCAPE ACCENTS




#00b3aa  
R:0 G:179 B:170  
C:83 M:0 Y:42 K:0

### GEORGIA



#f15f3f  
R:241 G:95 B:63  
C:0 M:78 Y:81 K:0

### TAGLINE TEXT



#fbaa1b  
R:251 G:170 B:27  
C:0 M:38 Y:99 K:0

**GEORGIA** — Gotham Book  
**HI-LO TRAIL** — Carrosserie Fat  
**BIKE • HIKE • RUN • PLAY** — Carrosserie Fat, with tracking

## HI-LO COUNTY BRANDING

Each county will have its own variation of the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail logo. To keep the branding recognizable across each county, much of the logo remains the same. The only modification is the replacement of the tagline, “BIKE • HIKE • RUN • PLAY” with the name of the county.

The text identifying each county utilizes the same yellow the tagline uses in the original logo. The tracking and size of the text varies per county so that the text balances with “HI-LO TRAIL” and can be easily read.

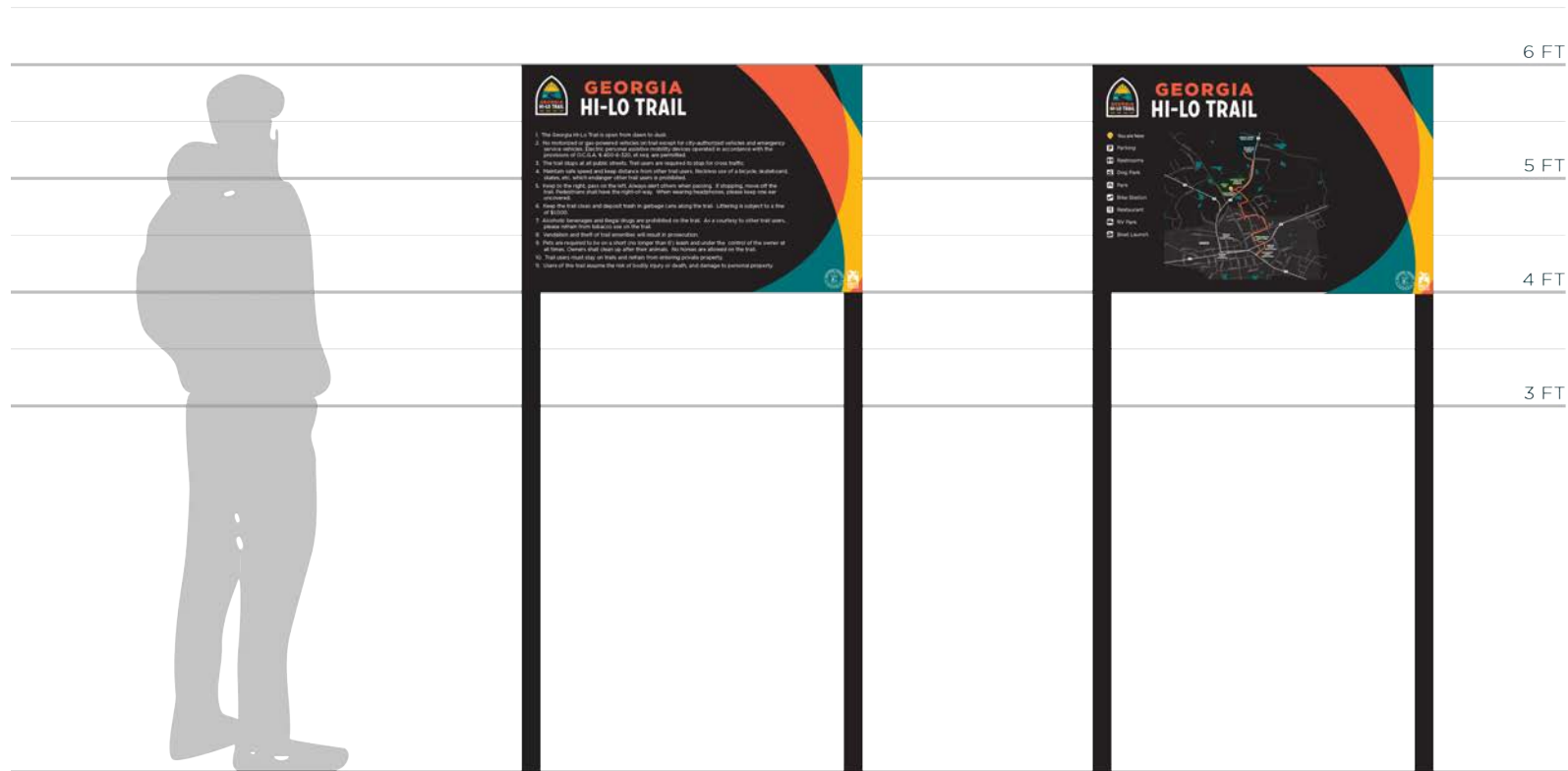


# SIGN STANDARDS

There are three types of signs of proposed along the Georgia Hi-Lo trail: kiosk signs, wayfinding signs, regulatory signs, and mile markers. The signs are made with direct printed aluminum panels mounted onto painted aluminum poles using stainless steel hardware. Direct print aluminum panels provide opportunities to utilize the Georgia Hi-Lo color scheme strengthening the branding across the entire length of the trail. The use of these removable panels also allows for the signs to be easily replaced with a new panel without the need to replace the entire sign.

## KIOSK SIGNS

Kiosk signs are placed at trailheads and major access points. They are informational and provide maps, trail rules, and acknowledgments. Kiosk signs may also show amenities located at the destination they are located at. To maximize the space, it is recommended to use both sides of the sign.



KIOSK SIGN  
BACK

KIOSK SIGN  
FRONT



## WAYFINDING SIGNS

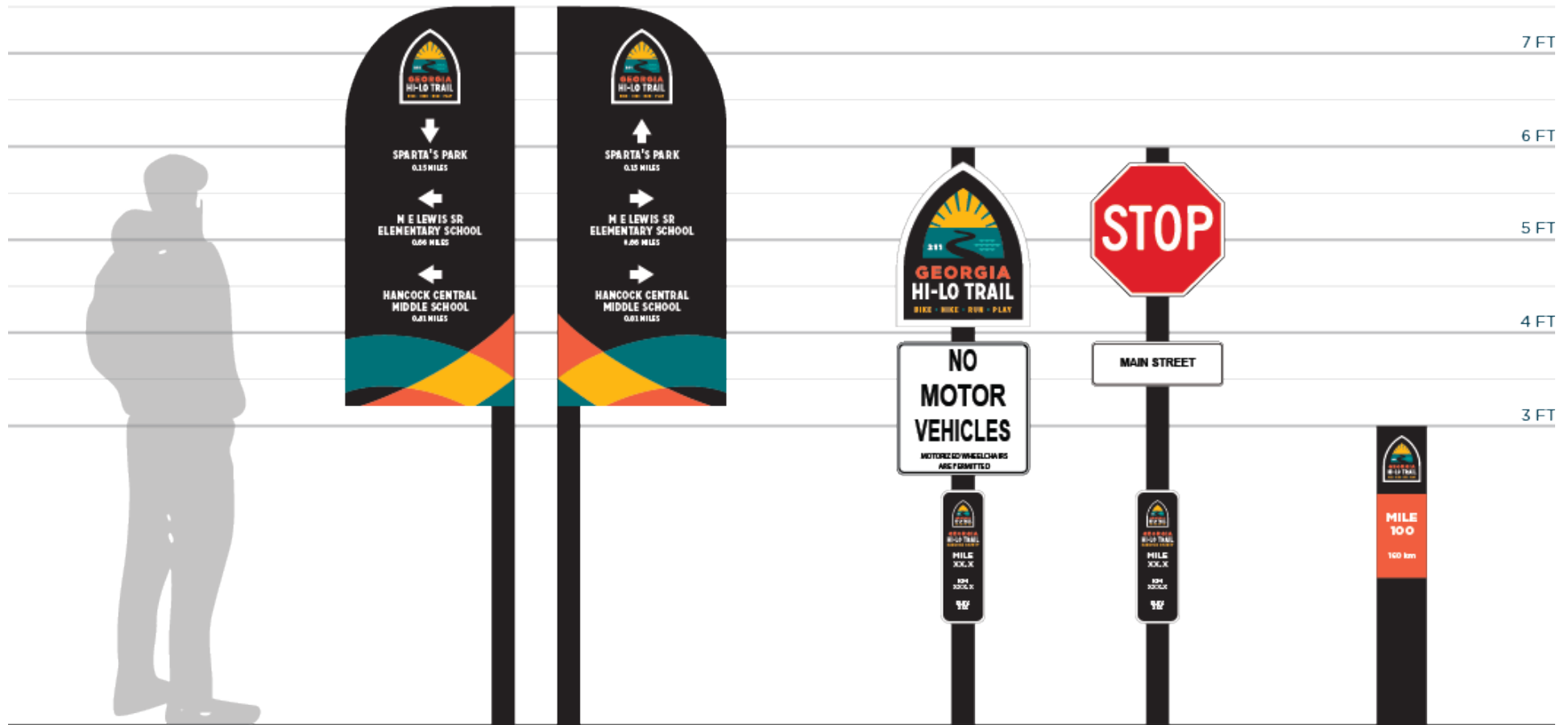
Wayfinding signs are placed at major intersections and help guide trail users to major destinations. They include the direction and distances to the destinations shown on the sign.

## REGULATORY SIGNS

Regulatory signs are most frequently seen on the trail and provide information on how to safely navigate the trail. These signs provide branding opportunities and vary based on the location of each sign.

## MILE MARKERS

Mile markers are placed at one-mile distances along the trail. They begin at mile 0 and show the distance in miles, kilometers, and the elevation of the trail.



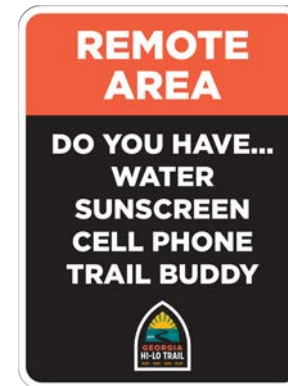
WAYFINDING SIGN  
FRONT/BACK VIEW

REGULATORY  
SIGNS

MILE MARKER

## CUSTOM SIGN PANELS

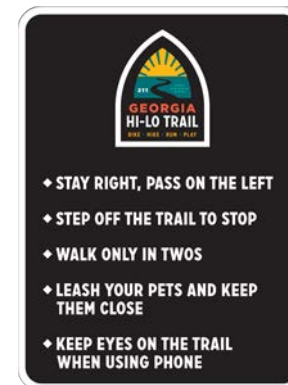
Custom sign panels are panels utilized on regulatory signs. These signs provide branding opportunities throughout the trail and can provide trail users with additional information. The sign panels shown below are examples of custom sign panels.



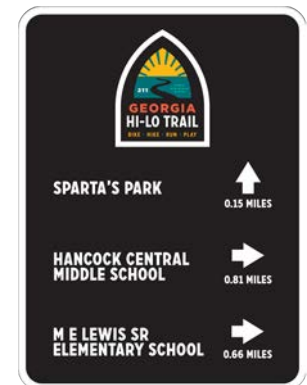
Informational sign panels are used to provide trail users with additional information that may not appear on trailhead signs or are specific to a certain area. Site specific information could include entering a wildlife habitat or remote area.



Destination panels guide trail users to points of interest along the trail.



Secondary wayfinding signs provide additional guidance to trail users without having to use a wayfinding sign.



Etiquette panels are used to reiterate rules in areas where kiosk signs are not located nearby.

# AMENITIES

The amenities shown below are recommended for use along the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail.



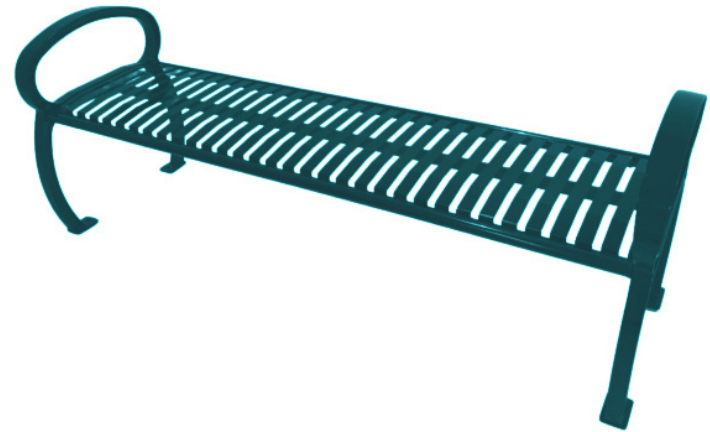
## BENCH

### Wilmington Bench with Back

974-Premium

By Ultra Site

6 ft bench with vertical slats.  
Cast aluminum, power coated in Ultrablue.  
Surface mount optional.



## BACKLESS BENCH

### Wilmington Bench without Back

978-Premium

By Ultra Site

6 ft bench with vertical slats.  
Cast aluminum, powder coated in Ultrablue.  
Surface mount optional.





### BIKE RACK

#### **Square Inverted Series with Georgia Hi-Lo Branding**

5821

By Ultra Site

1 loop c-channel rail with square tubing.

18 inch wide, surface mounted.

Powder coated in Ultrablue.



### TRASH/RECYCLING RECEPTACLE

#### **Classic Swing Door with Rain Bonnet Lid**

CL-36

By Ultra Site

36 gallon capacity with side-door opening.

Stainless steel hardware.

Lid and receptacle powder coated black.



## DOG WASTE STATION

### Deluxe Single-Pull Dog Station

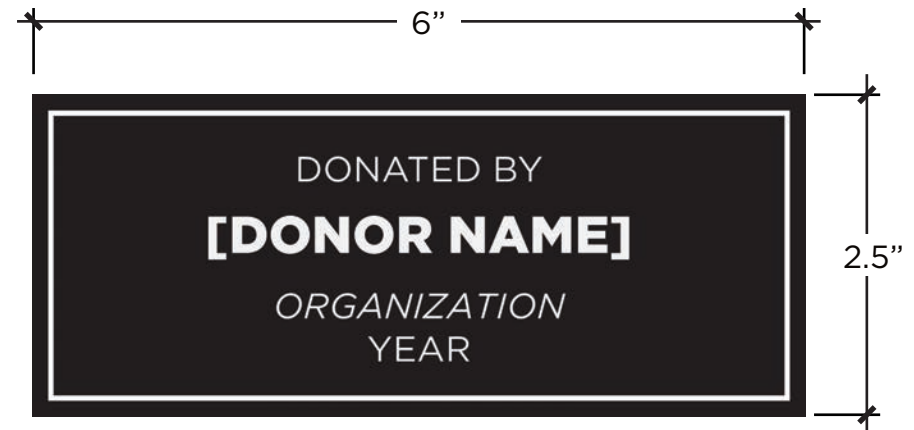
5821

By Jazzy

Single pull station that holds up to 400 dog waste bags.

Commercial-grade aluminum.

Powder coated/UV protected finish in black.



## DONOR PLAQUE

Donor plaques should be 6" x 2.5" and made with cast metal. There should be a 3 pt wide border offset 1/8" from the edge.

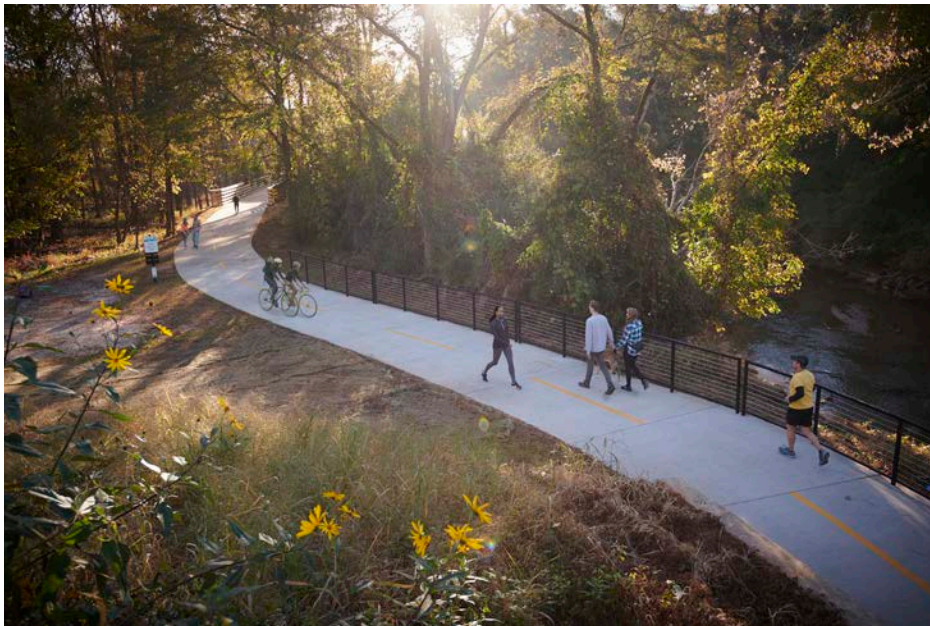
"Donated by" should be in Gotham Book, 20 pt. The donor(s) name(s) should be in Gotham Black, 29 pt. The organization should be in Gotham Book Italic, 20 pt. and the year should be in Gotham Book, 20 pt. All text should be center justified.

# CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

The Construction Guidelines provide guidelines for the construction of different trail types that will be seen along the Georgia Hi-Lo. These guidelines are strongly recommended and should not be broken for minor budgetary purposes. However, it is understood that under certain circumstances the provided guidelines may not be practical. In those instances, trail width, landscape buffers, and other major design elements can be adjusted to create a comfortable and appealing trail user experience.

## CONCRETE

A concrete surface provides a long-term, low maintenance trail. A 2-foot minimum clear zone should be included on both sides. Additionally, there should be a 10-foot minimum vertical clearance from the trail surface. The entire length of the paved trail should include a 4" wide, alternating yellow centerline stripe and stop markings when approaching intersections.



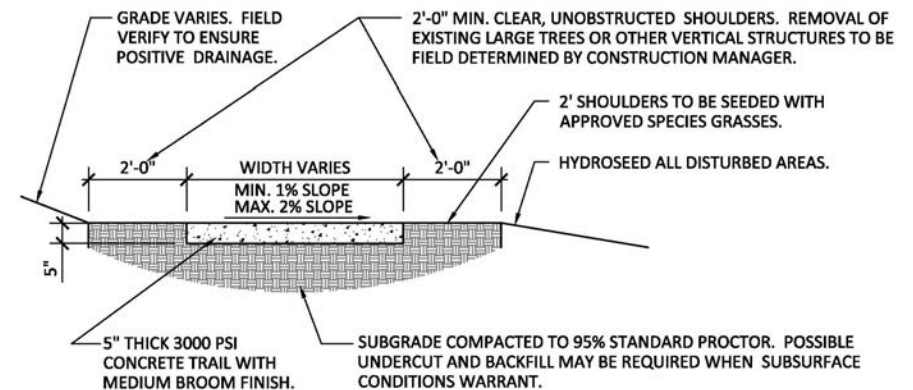
Concrete trail located in DeKalb County.

### NOTES:

1) 4"x (TRAIL WIDTH) ALTERNATING YELLOW CENTERLINE STRIPING TO BE INSTALLED ALONG ENTIRE LENGTH OF TRAIL CENTERLINE.

2) CONTRACTOR TO SAW CUT CONTROL JOINT AT LEAST 1/4 DEPTH OF SLAB ACROSS ENTIRE WIDTH OF TRAIL. CONTROL JOINTS TO BE LOCATED THE SAME DISTANCE APART AS THE WIDTH OF TRAIL (I.E. 12' WIDE TRAIL TO HAVE CONTROL JOINTS EVERY 12' ALONG TRAIL). CONTRACTOR REQUIRED TO REMOVE SAW DUST AFTER CUTTING.

3) EXPANSION JOINTS TO BE LOCATED ALONG TRAIL MIN. EVERY 100' IN PLACE OF CONTROL JOINT.

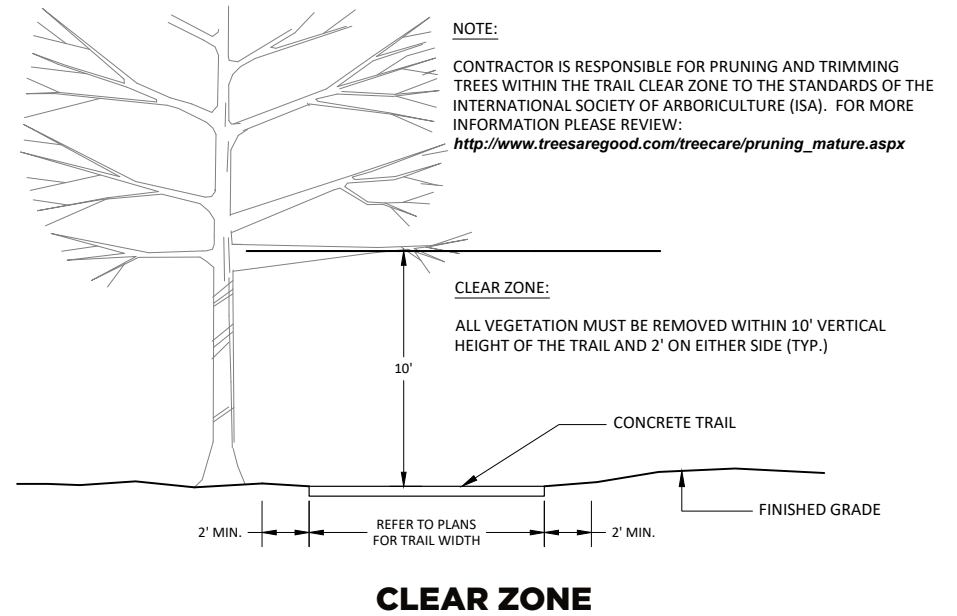


**CONCRETE TRAIL CROSS SECTION**

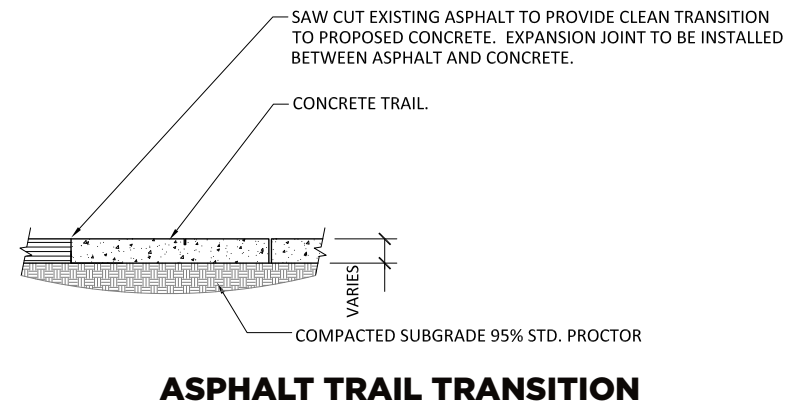




Concrete trail in Carrollton.



Peachtree Creek Greenway in Brookhaven.





## CRUSHER RUN

Crusher run is an aggregate mix of crushed stone and dust. It is a cheaper option than concrete, but still provides a compacted surface for trail users.



*Example of crusher run used to create a road.*

## DIRT ROAD

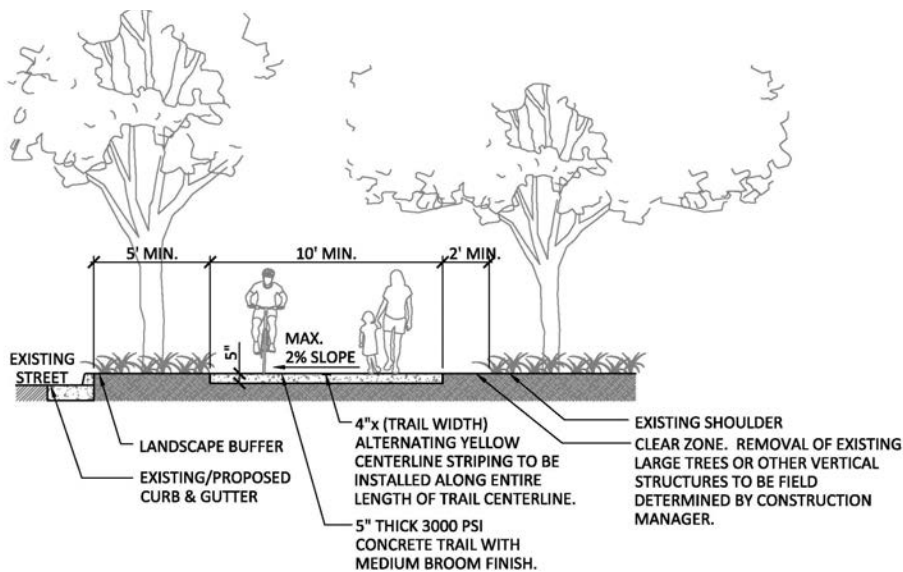
Existing dirt roads provide a compacted surface to trail users. Although low in cost, utilizing existing dirt roads as part of the Georgia Hi-Lo would require land or easement acquisition.



*Bike riders on dirt road during the 2022 Athens to Savannah Ride.*

## SIDEPATH

Sidepaths consist of a 10-foot minimum paved trail with a 5-foot minimum landscape buffer between the trail and the road. The section below depicts a typical sidepath.



**SIDEPATH TYPICAL SECTION**



*Example of a sidepath as a linear park in Chastain Park in Atlanta.*



## CALM STREET

All calm streets should have standard MUTCD shared lane markings to alert all motorists of the presence of pedestrians and cyclists in the roadway. Traffic calming elements such as islands, speed cushions, and chicanes can be utilized on streets to slow down traffic in shared-use areas.



*Neighborhood greenway signage.*



*Chicanes and Islands.*



*Pavement markings can be customized to provide a branding opportunity for the Georgia Hi-Lo.*



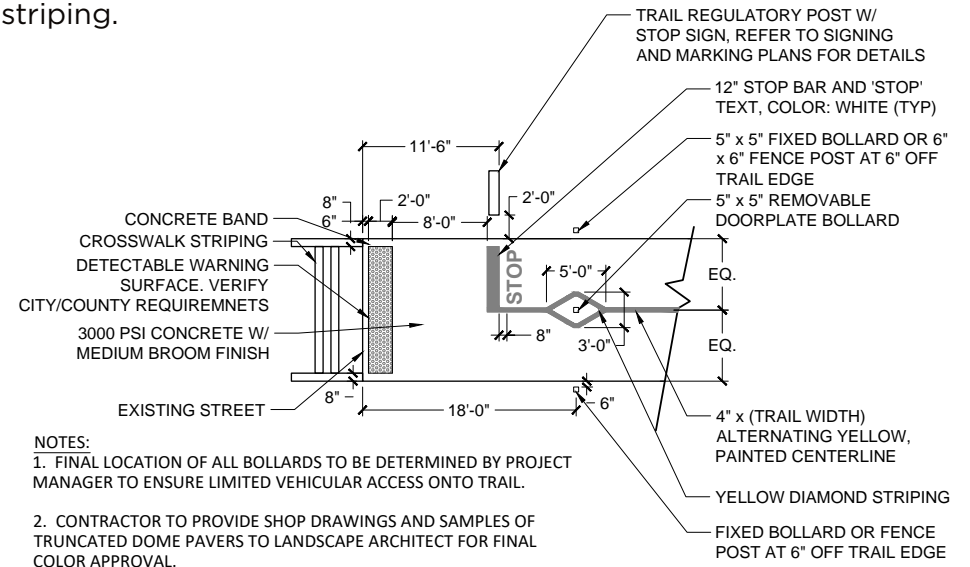
*Combining signage, striping, and physical street calming measures helps make Calm Streets safer and more inviting for pedestrians and bicycle riders.*

## INTERSECTION DETAILS

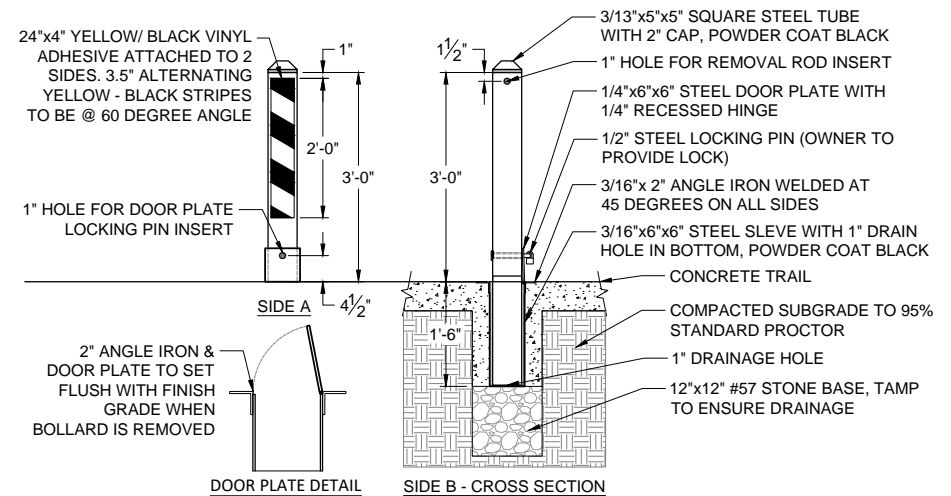
Typical trail intersections include signage, bollards, and pavement striping.



Spanish Moss Trail in Beaufort, South Carolina.



## INTERSECTION DETAIL



- NOTES:
1. CONTRACTOR TO SUBMIT SHOP DRAWINGS TO PROJECT MANAGER FOR APPROVAL PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION.
  2. ALL METAL TO BE POWDER COATED BLACK UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.
  3. VINYL ADHESIVE TO BE 3M 3930 HIGH INTENSITY REFLECTIVE VINYL WITH 3M 1160 OVER LAMINATE.
  4. ALL BOLLARDS TO BE FIELD LOCATED BY PROJECT MANAGER.

## REMOVABLE BOLLARD



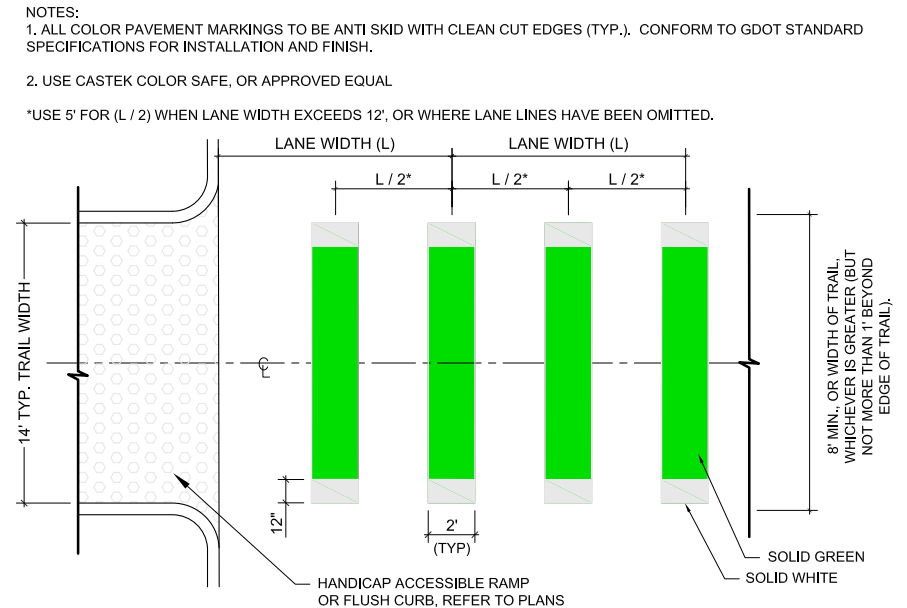
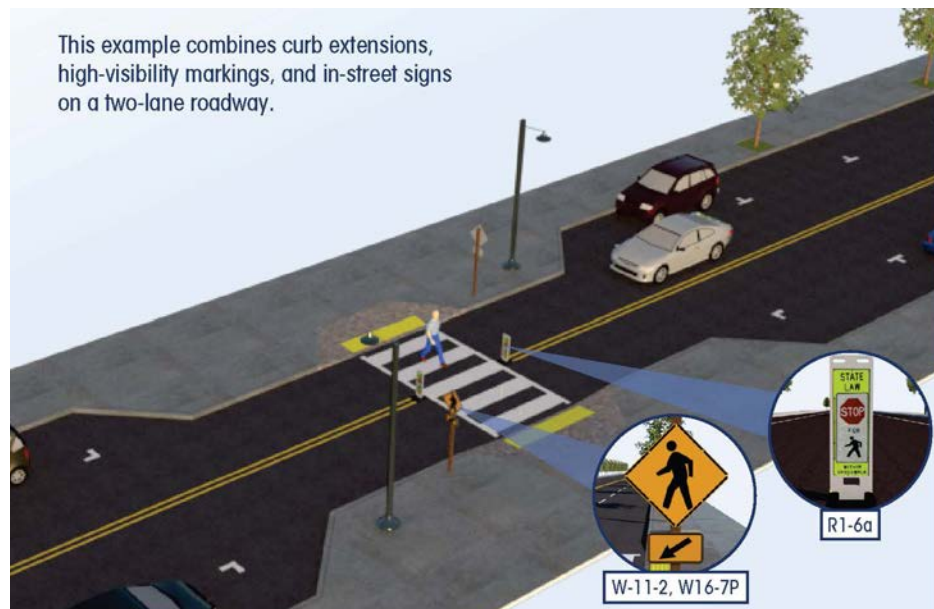
## AT-GRADE CROSSING STANDARDS

The U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) advocates for the implementation of pedestrian safety measures to enhance safety at roadway crossing locations. The interventions and strategies outlined in this document have been proven to be effective. It is crucial for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail and participating municipalities to adopt these standards to ensure safe crossing for trail users.

## MARKED CROSSWALKS

It is preferable to have marked crosswalks in areas with significant pedestrian activity, such as signalized intersections and locations with sufficiently high levels of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Crosswalks with high visibility contribute to enhanced trail user safety by increasing motorists' awareness where drivers may not be accustomed to encountering bicyclists and pedestrians.

For uncontrolled crossing locations, such as multi-lane roadway crossings where the annual average daily traffic (AADT) exceeds 10,000 vehicles, additional safety measures are necessary to further enhance pedestrian safety.



## GREEN STRIPING TRAIL CROSSWALK



*Example of green stripe trail crossing.*



## CROSSING ISLANDS

Crossing islands are road medians with refuge areas. They allow trail users to concentrate on one direction of traffic at a time when crossing a multi-lane road. The implementation of crossing islands is recommended for mid-block pedestrian crossings, particularly on roads with four or more travel lanes where speed limits exceed 35 mph, and/or where the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is 9,000 or greater.

Trail crossing islands should be a minimum of eight feet wide and have ample length to allow for pedestrian queuing. Ramps leading up to the cut-through should include detectable warning surfaces for people with disabilities. In areas with on-street parking, curb extensions may be constructed in conjunction with crossing islands to provide better lines of sight.



## RAISED CROSSINGS

Raised crossings, or raised intersections, are ramped speed tables that span the entire width of a roadway or intersection. They enhance the visibility of pedestrians in a driver's field of view, lower vehicle speeds, and improve vehicle-to-pedestrian yielding. This preventative measure has the potential to decrease vehicle-trail user crashes by up to 45 %.

Raised crossings are typically installed on roads with two or three lanes with speed limits of 30 mph or less, and where the AADT is below 9,000. The typical design of raised crossings includes a 10-foot-wide tabletop with 5% minimum running slope for both approach ramps. Detectable warning surfaces should be installed on both sides of the trail leading to the intersection of the speed table. When installing raised crossings, drainage and stormwater infrastructure need to be designed to avoid negative impacts.



*Example of raised trail crossing in Tucker*

## PEDESTRIAN HYBRID BEACONS (PHB) AND RAPID FLASHING BEACONS (RRFB)

PHBs are good treatment candidate for roads with three or more lanes that generally have AADT above 9,000. PHBs are highly recommended for roadways with speed limits greater than 40 mph.

RRFBs should be considered for all mid-block and intersection crossings where there is no existing traffic signal or no all-way stop condition for vehicular traffic at the crossing. RRFBs are particularly effective at multi-lane crossings with speed limits at or below 40 miles per hour. Accompanying trail crossing warning signs at and ahead of the crossing are required to alert drivers of the crossing.



*Example of a trail crossing with a pedestrian hybrid beacon (a.k.a. "HAWK" signal)*



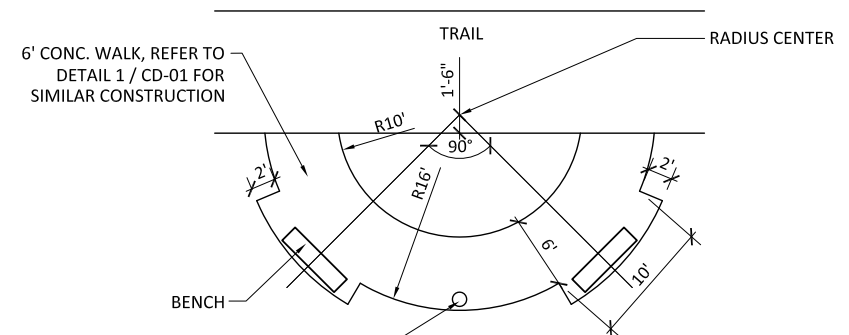
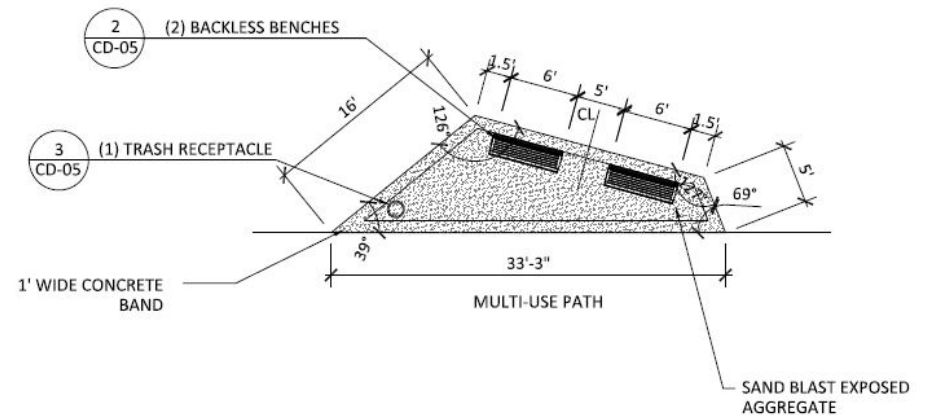
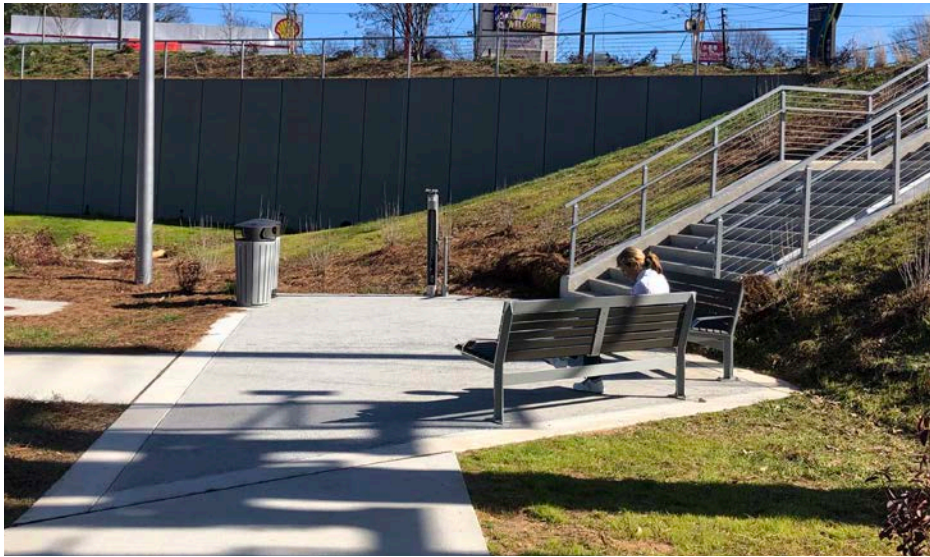
*Example of crossing with a rapid flashing beacon.*

1 "Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon," in PEDSAFE: Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System. FHWA, (2013)



## POCKET PARK

Pocket parks are a highly desirable amenity along trails. They offer trail users a designated space to sit and rest and socialize with friends and family. Standard furnishings and signage should be placed at all pocket parks to offer seating and information regarding the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail. The examples shown on this page are of two different types of pocket park designs.



NOTE:  
ALL POCKET PARKS TO BE FIELD LOCATED BY PROJECT MANAGER. REFER TO PLANS FOR GENERAL LOCATION. DESIGNS WILL VARY DEPENDING ON LOCATION.

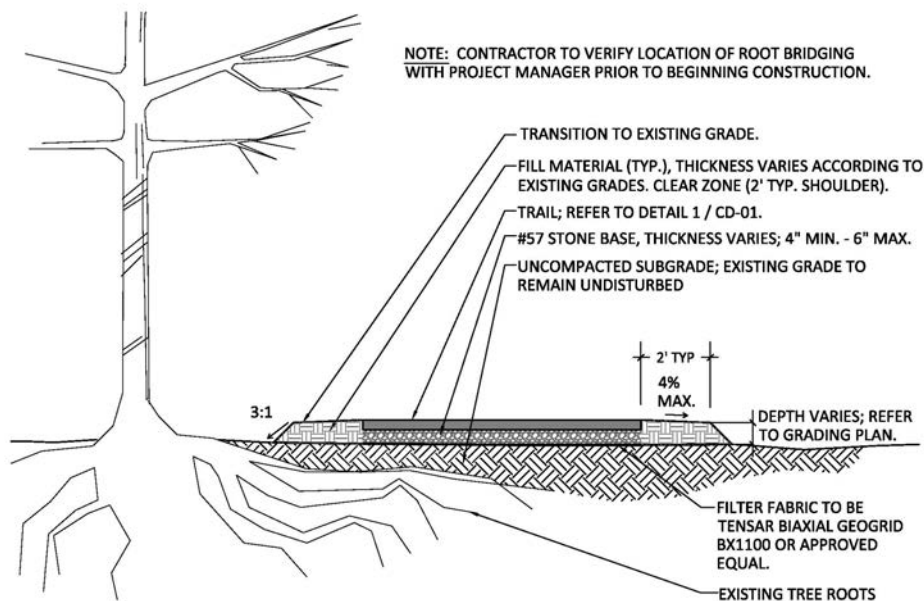
## POCKET PARK DETAILS

Pocket park examples.

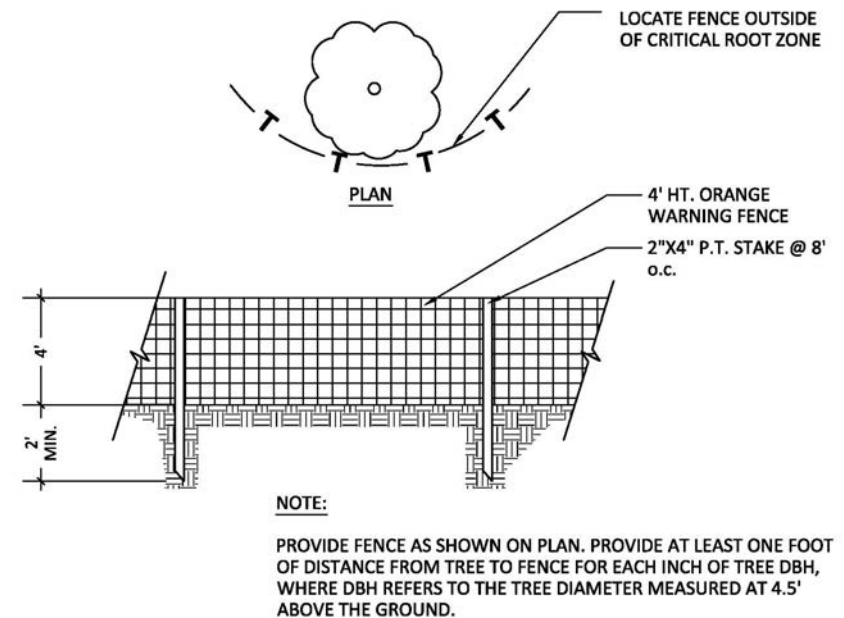


## TREE ROOT BRIDGING

Root bridging is a strategy to protect tree roots during the installation of a hard-surface trail. Protecting trees within the vicinity of the trail enables their survival and allows them to continue to contribute to a pleasant trail user experience. Another tree protection strategy is to install construction fencing prior to demolition to ensure that trees are not removed mistakenly.



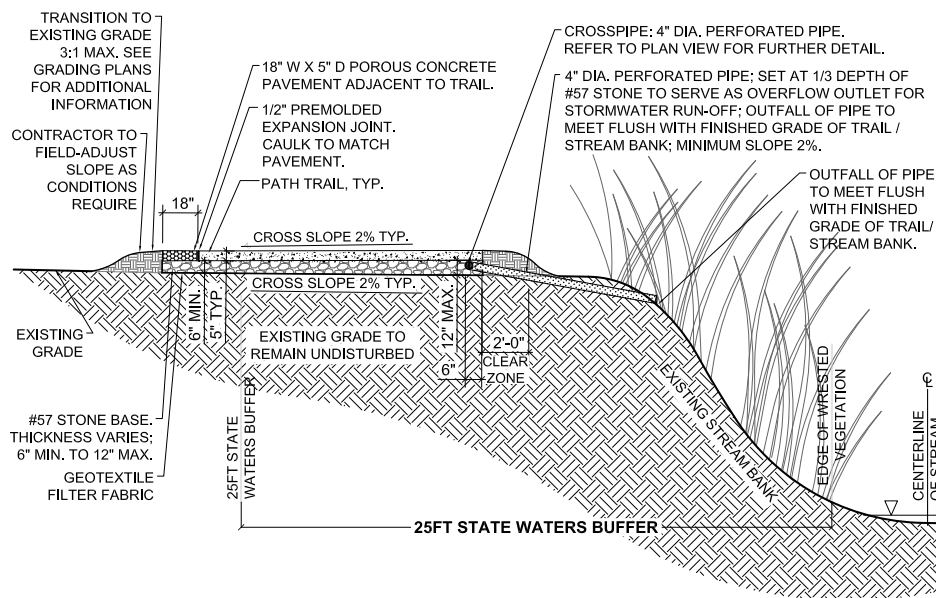
**TREE ROOT BRIDGING**



**TREE PROTECTION**

## STORMWATER INFILTRATION

Infiltration systems facilitate the drainage of storm water away from a stream by directing it across the trail and into a gravel filtration drain. This system enables runoff to be filtered beneath the trail prior to reaching the stream. Although run-off from a multi-use trail is generally very low in pollutants, the volume of run-off is also slowed using this approach which is suitable in stream buffer zones



**INFILTRATION DETAIL**



*Tree root bridging allows the trail to come close to specimen trees without causing harm while a porous concrete edge aids infiltration.*



## BRIDGES AND BOARDWALKS

Bridges and boardwalks are utilized in areas where the trail needs to cross over a body of water. This could include rivers, lakes, and creeks. Using prefabricated bridges allows for a uniform look across multiple municipalities.



*Prefabricated bridge on the Firefly Trail in Greene County.*



*Concrete deck boardwalk at Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Extension in Cheshire, Connecticut*

*Image source: Accessed via <https://gaptrail.org/before-you-go/how-to-prepare/https://www.permatrak.com/permatrak-project-profiles/farmington-canal-heritage-trail-extension>*

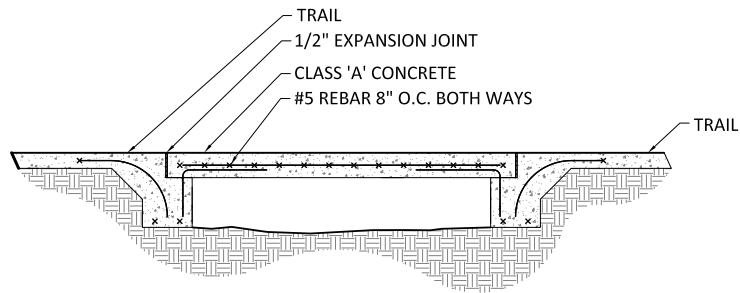


*Example of a custom designed bridge at Proctor Creek Greenway in Atlanta.*



## STRUCTURAL SLAB

Structural slabs provide an environmentally friendly method of creating a drainage swale underneath the trail. They can also be used to span over minor tributaries. The images below show the construction detail of a structural slab and how a slab can be utilized in a trail.



### NOTES:

1. CONTRACTOR TO PROVIDE SHOP DRAWINGS COMPLETED BY A LICENSED STRUCTURAL ENGINEER PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION, FOR APPROVAL BY OWNER AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.
2. TOTAL HEIGHT FROM TOP OF TRAIL SURFACE TO LOW POINT OF SWALE IS NOT TO EXCEED 30".

## STRUCTURAL SLAB



*Examples of the use of structural slabs in a trail.*



# **5 GEORGIA HI-LO NEXT STEPS**



## LOOKING AHEAD

Completion of a trail covering more than 200 miles across forests, rivers, and tidal marshes and through rural areas, state parks, small towns, suburbs, and cities, will necessarily involve many steps and epic feats of coordination. It will require the Georgia Hi-Lo Initiative's Board and all of its staff to focus their efforts today and over many years to come. PATH has learned that persistence and patience are the virtues most needed during long-distance trail planning and that with them big things can happen. The Georgia Hi-Lo Trail and its constituent cities and counties are fortunate to have inspiring leaders, competent staff, and dedicated community volunteers who can keep the vision focused and do the necessary hard work.

The PATH team recommends breaking the schedule into three phases:

### LAUNCH

2024 - 2030

Model projects teach east-central Georgia about the Hi-Lo Trail

### PERSISTENCE

2030 - 2040

Trail extensions begin reaching into rural areas

### PERSISTENCE

2040 - 2050

Further extensions, close gaps, and complete the trail



## HI-LO 2030 – LAUNCH

By 2030, the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail should be on target for completing all phases of the model projects in each of the subject counties. This means that 36 miles of trail will be built and available for residents, future residents, and visitors to enjoy. Each of the eight counties making up the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail will have something to share.

During the launch phase, communication is critical, as is administrative determination. We must show the citizens that city and county governments and their partners are capable of building things that improve the quality of life for all members of the community – especially rural communities that have seen the negative effects of private disinvestment in recent years. This means that all stakeholders agree to work through issues and be creative in finding solutions. It also means all community members are involved in planning where the trail goes and how it's paid for.

### LAUNCH PHASE

Broadly engage as many community members as possible to build awareness of what the trail can do and galvanize momentum. Administrators of the cities and counties and their allies in Georgia Hi-Lo and regional organizations then must nurture this momentum with successful and strategic grant writing – first for design and engineering, and then for construction. With money raised, the trail is ready to be designed, and then built in phases. While phasing may extend the overall timeline, it makes smaller pieces happen sooner – critical for the public to see and protective of staff morale. Building out the phases of the model project will take several years for each county (especially when working with state or federal funding), and the community needs to be kept in the loop with regular updates so that momentum is not lost. If each county has committed to moving forward on model projects at roughly the same time, substantial trail-wide progress is made. When any phase of the model project is complete, it is critical to celebrate grandly and inclusively, as this will strengthen community identification with the project.

### LAUNCH PHASE THEMES

ENGAGE BROADLY

GRANT-WRITE SUCCESSFULLY

IDENTIFY EFFECTIVELY

ADJUST FLEXIBLY

LEAD INSPIRINGLY

BUILD

CELEBRATE INCLUSIVITY



## WRITING GRANTS FOR TRAILS IN THE CONTEXT OF GEORGIA HI-LO TRAIL

The PATH team has experience working with many grant-recipient cities and counties and has identified an overall strategy for successful fundraising for grant applications.

When the goal is to raise money – the source doesn't matter. While there are a number of “traditional” grant sources – for example, the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) – there are also less traditional or less well-known sources. Most recently, PATH has seen communities apply successfully for HUD (federal department) grants for trails that provide effective alternative transportation access to affordable housing. Another example for innovative funding source is to utilize 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant to fund portions of sidepath with green infrastructures that enhance stormwater management adjacent to an existing road.

Think collaboratively. Often communities that apply collaboratively for trail money can tap into the desire of granting agencies to “spread the wealth” to cover more constituents (and voters!) Regional thinking in this context is essential and might even offer opportunities within counties and between city and county governments to collaborate on a “win,” that is vital for inter-governmental working relationships.

Plan today for your match tomorrow. Most grants have a local match requirement. The GOSP, for example, has a 25% match. Applicants who can show greater than 25% match (even 26% match) look better to grant reviewers. This money could be from local government revenues, it could also be grants from foundations, local corporations, or local fundraising programs.

Give them exactly what they want. It is crucial to understand what the granting agency is looking for when submitting grant applications – the how and the what. This entails talking to the grants manager of the entity in question and asking what successful applications look like and what the goals of the entity are in relation to the grant. If the agency has as its primary goal – “conservation” – then a phone call or an in-person meeting should help clarify what kind of conservation and provide some examples from previous grant winners. The grant application

then should show exactly how the trail project will help the agency fulfill its stated goal – whether it's “conservation,” “worksite access,” “safe routes to school,” or any other stated goal.

Don't get discouraged. Granting agencies must sift through dozens or even hundreds of applications each funding cycle. Not everyone is chosen, and many worthy projects go unfunded in that round. If grant applications are not successful, it is imperative to understand why so that future applications do not make the same mistake (if indeed, there were any mistakes). This means reaching out to the grant reviewers at an appropriate time for a debrief if they are open to this. Grant reviewers, although notoriously busy, nonetheless appreciate helping the communities they are hired to serve – and sometimes these frank discussions can be useful if with nothing else than building rapport with the granting agency.



*Trails provide a safe space for exercising.*



## HI-LO 2040 – PERSISTENCE

Fast forward to 2031, and the Launch Phase and 36 miles of trail are complete (plus 20 miles from the completion of the Firefly Trail!). With 150 miles remaining, we now move into the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail Persistence Phase, which will rely on the same administrative determination and community enthusiasm as before, but now with some experience under the belt. During the persistence phase, the Georgia Hi-Lo counties should collectively plan on completing 75 to 100 miles of trail extensions.

These extensions could be from the Launch Phase's model projects, or they could be in different parts of the county. In Emanuel County, for example, the Persistence Phase might most easily be built in and around Swainsboro – 11 miles west of the model project in Twin City. In Chatham County, for another example, the Persistence Phase could continue the model project east toward the Savannah historic district, or it could focus on linking the west side of Savannah to the sidepath projects on US-80 to Tybee Island.

### PERSISTENCE PHASE

The Persistence Phase should focus on the easiest-to-build extensions wherever these can happen. If a hoped-for extension is temporarily stymied by a reluctant landowner, then move to another segment – or redesign to avoid the landowner entirely. It will be critically important that the project sponsors and key stakeholders approach landowners strategically and respectfully to gain trust (introduce gently!) All concerns should be validated and addressed – including by tweaking designs or alignments. The experience of trail neighbors along other trail segments in the county will be especially valuable here as will long-established relationships between county administrators and landowners.

From a grant writing perspective, it will now be easier to explain to grantors what the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail is, and how their grant money will be used to extend the benefits of the trail to more people, and/or to reach more key destinations. Once the momentum has been built in the Launch Phase, it becomes easier to convince grantors (and philanthropists!) to extend an existing greatly appreciated facility than to begin from scratch.

### PERSISTENCE PHASE THEMES

INTRODUCE GENTLY

ADJUST FLEXIBLY

COMMUNICATE FREQUENTLY

GRANT-WRITE EFFECTIVELY

BUILD

CELEBRATE INCLUSIVELY

## HI-LO 2050 – ARRIVAL

Fast forward again to 2050 – we will all be much older and hopefully much wiser than we are today – and we have arrived at our final destination – the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail – America’s longest, most beautiful, paved trail.

The Arrival Phase will rely on the weight of previous successes and the community’s support for the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail built to date. This momentum will be necessary because the Arrival Phase will likely be the connecting segments that are hardest to build politically. There may be holdouts in key areas. These will require more resources in time, money, and political goodwill to achieve. County and city staff supported by the trail community volunteers and staff from the Georgia Hi-Lo should be carefully attuned to changes in the real estate ownership or changes in hearts of key stakeholders.

Opportunities should be seized as they become available. Grants should be written sufficiently flexible (where possible) to enable flexibility in final alignments. As with the previous phases, the community must be kept up to date using whatever future tools are available to do so.

### ARRIVAL PHASE

The Arrival Phase is also the time when previous segments that were built with soft surface materials for cost-saving reasons are now converted to concrete. While concrete is more expensive on the front end, it is far cheaper to maintain over time. It also provides better access for those using wheels – whether wheelchairs, walkers, bicycles, or scooters.

By 2050, with the Georgia Hi-Lo Trail completed, it will be time to think of connecting spurs to other destinations in the subject counties that were not feasible to include in the original plan.

### LAUNCH PHASE THEMES

COMMUNICATE STRATEGICALLY

PAY ATTENTION CAREFULLY

CONTINUE ENTHUSIASTICALLY

PLAN OPTIMISTICALLY

BUILD

CELEBRATE INCLUSIVITY







# APPENDIX

# RESPONSES TO PLANNING QUESTIONS BY COUNTY

## WHAT ARE YOUR COUNTY'S GOALS IN RELATION TO TRAILS?

### **Hancock's top five goals in relation to trails:**

1. Promote tourism
2. Improve physical health
3. Kids' transportation option
4. Get seniors outside, moving, socializing
5. Safe outdoor locations

### **Washington's top five goals in relation to trails:**

1. Economic development
2. Attract tourists
3. Sustain and grow population
4. Support physical health
5. Leverage strong internet

### **Johnson's top five goals in relation to trails:**

1. Community bonding
2. Preservation through economic development
3. Improve broadband
4. Events for kids
5. Mobility

### **Emanuel's top five goals in relation to trails:**

1. Economic development
2. Health and wellness
3. Bring people together
4. Redevelopment
5. Visible access to attractions

### **Bulloch's top four goals in relation to trails:**

1. Downtown development
2. Stormwater planning
3. Community building
4. Physical health

### **Effingham's top five goals in relation to trails:**

1. Driver/bicyclist safety
2. Connecting county assets
3. Alt transportation
4. Aesthetics of travel
5. Prepare for future growth

### **Chatham's top seven goals in relation to trails:**

1. Healthy choice commuting
2. Equitable outcomes/involvement
3. Access to county parks
4. Bring neighbors together
5. Safety
6. Community education
7. Amenities and displacement

## WHO ARE WE BUILDING THE TRAILS FOR?

### **Hancock's target market for trails**

1. Families
2. Kids
3. Seniors
4. Tourists
5. People without cars

### **Washington's target market for trails**

1. Tourists
2. Potential residents
3. Kids -> future residents
4. People with disabilities
5. 18-35 y.o. live/work/play

### **Johnson's target market for trails**

1. Kids going to school/playing
2. Tourists
3. Downtown businesses
4. Seniors needing exercise
5. People without cars
6. Alternative commuters
7. Potential new residents

### **Emanuel's target market for trails**

1. Tourist-oriented businesses
2. Families
3. Students going to college
4. Social groups
5. Residents accessing nature



**Bulloch's target market for trails**

1. Residents uniting
2. Tourists
3. University students
4. Real estate investors
5. Commuters

**Effingham's target market for trails**

1. Recreationalists
2. Event attendees
3. Families building memories
4. Pet walkers
5. Kids transportation

**Chatham's target market for trails**

1. Families
2. Commuters
3. People running errands
4. Social togetherness
5. Outdoor tourism
6. Physical health

**WHAT ARE THE KEY DESTINATIONS IN YOUR COUNTY?****Hancock's key destinations**

1. Hancock County Public Schools
2. Historic Sparta
3. Jewell/Mayfield
4. Springfield
5. Hamburg State Park
6. Amanda Dickson Plantation
7. Hancock County Park (open in 2025)

**Washington's key destinations**

1. Hamburg State Park
2. Historic Sandersville
3. Brown House
4. Kaolin Mfg.
5. Schools
6. Chalker and Warthen
7. Tennille

**Johnson's key destinations**

1. Wrightsville Rec Complex
2. Railroad depot
3. Courthouse Square
4. Grice House
5. Home Circle Cemetery
6. Kite Museum

**Emanuel's key destinations**

1. East Georgia State College
2. Southeastern Tech College
3. Downtown Swainsboro
4. Downtown Twin City
5. George L. Smith State Park
6. Oohoopee Dunes NWR

**Bulloch's key destinations**

1. Botanical Garden
2. Georgia Southern
3. Downtown Statesboro
4. Farmers Market
5. Willow Hill Center
6. Lotts Creek Church
7. Lakeview Road
8. Town of Register

**Effingham's key destinations**

1. Schools
2. County parks (Pineora)
3. Honey Ridge Agricenter
4. Guyton
5. Springfield
6. Egypt
7. Meldrim

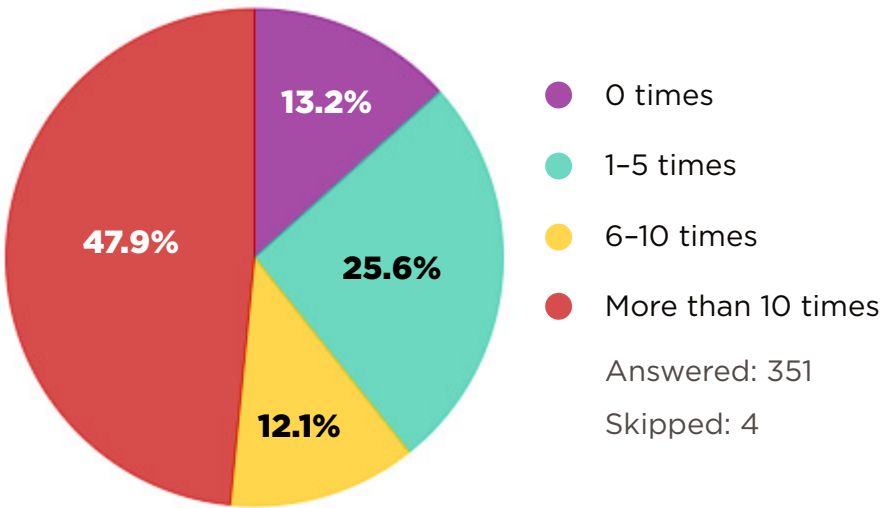
**Chatham's key destinations**

1. Enmarket Arena
2. Tybee Island
3. Waterworks Building
4. Pooler/Wentworth
5. Tom Triplett Park
6. Historic Savannah

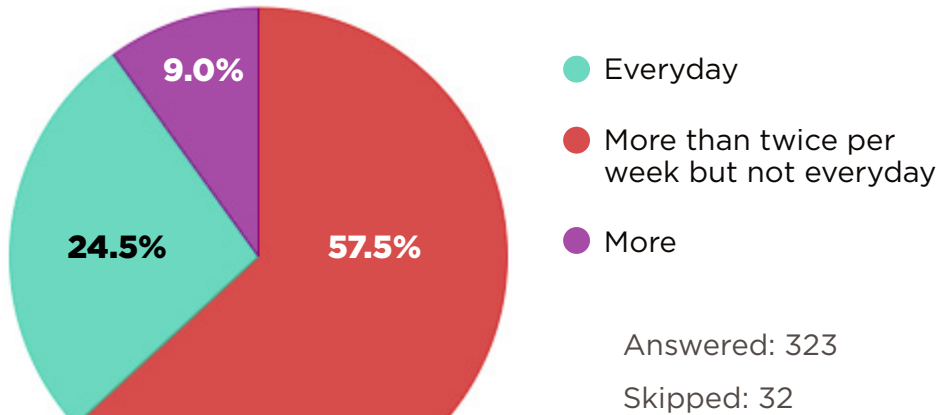
# SURVEY RESPONSES

Survey was open from July 10 to August 17. The questions and the survey results are indicated in this section.

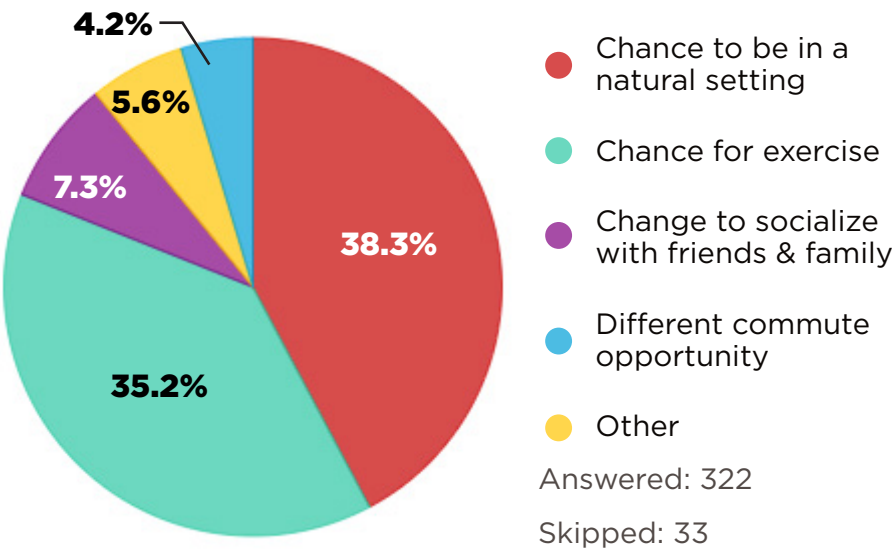
## HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN ON A TRAIL IN THE LAST YEAR?



## IF A TRAIL WERE WITHIN 10 MINUTES OF YOUR HOME, HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU USE IT?



## IF YOU HAVE BEEN ON A TRAIL IN THE LAST YEAR, WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT IT?



## WHAT DESTINATIONS IN YOUR COUNTY WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET TO ON A TRAIL?

Responses	Count
None	14
Georgia	11
Brooklet	11
Guyton	6
Statesboro to Brooklet	5
Statesboro	5
Grocery Store	3
Downtown	3
Town	2
George L Smith	2
Rincon	2
Everywhere	2
Downtown Savannah	2
Any	2
All	2

A trail would not benefit my commute because I live in Kite and it's still too far to walk or bike to a surrounding town but I would enjoy being able to take my kids out to walk or bike on a trail just for fun and exercise

All but water or town

All States and Cities and Towns

All three municipalities (Guyton, Springfield and Rincon) as well as to current parks and new greenspaces/passive recreation parks that are sorely needed in Effingham County.

Along 301 from Statesboro all the way to SC to the Savannah River greenway

Altamaha river

Any of the county parks

Any rail areas

Anything out of Savannah without high truck volume

Anywhere

Anywhere as long as it's in a safe area

Anywhere away from private property. Would like this to be on WMA in my area.

Arcade, GA

Area hospitals

As a runner and cyclist in milledgeville, I would love to be able to cross the river and hop on a trail for exercise and longer miles! Being able to pass towns and "rest stops" would be appealing for longer days

Atlanta Georgia to Savannah Ga

Atlanta Motor Speedway

Beach, downtown area/ historical district

Bloomington

Brewery, downtown, restaurant, beach at Lake Oconee

Brooks, Rio

Bulloch-farmer's market, parks, Georgia Southern University, botanical garden, etc.

Business

Businesses and schools in Brooklet and Statesboro

Camping areas, lakes, ponds, grocery store, restaurants, shopping, govt buildings, everywhere since rural GA doesn't do bicycle trails well, if at all.

Camping spots

Close to campus



## WHAT DESTINATIONS IN YOUR COUNTY WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET TO ON A TRAIL? (CONTINUED)

Coast  
 Coffee shop  
 Coffee shops, breweries, restaurants  
 Columbus, GA  
 Connect parks and shopping centers.  
 County not that safe to walk in. Nothing interesting  
 County parks  
 Differnt areas to ride  
 Doraville or Chamblee MARTA  
 Downtown and mill creek  
 Downtown areas, something that connects to a river or other natural area  
 Downtown Brooklet  
 Downtown Greensboro, Lake Oconee  
 Downtown Guyton  
 downtown guyton or downtown springfield  
 Downtown Sandersville, Tennille for work  
 Downtown Savannah  
 Downtown Savannah  
 Downtown shops, playground, other trails  
 Downtown Statesboro  
 Downtown Tennille  
 Downtown Tennille, Downtown

Sandersville, Hamburg State Park  
 Downtown to Southside and islands  
 Downtown Twin City GA  
 Downtown Wrightsville  
 Downtown, coffee shops, Walmart , ice cream shop, mill creek park  
 Downtown, botanical gardens  
 downtown, GSU campus, residential neighborhoods  
 Downtown, parks, creeks or waterways  
 Downtowns of Swanee, Duluth, Lawrenceville  
 Drinking fountains/bathrooms  
 East Georgia State College  
 Ebenezer creek area  
 Effingham  
 Enmarket Arena, Bonaventure,  
 Evans, Ga  
 Everything. Otherwise, interesting natural areas swamps, creeks, wiregrass/longleaf pine forest, etc.  
 Fairmount Rd by the public park  
 Father's market  
 French quarter  
 From Athens to Atlanta  
 From city to city  
 From our neighborhood to the local elementary school, from our city to the beach

Ft Yargo  
 Georgia Southern  
 Georgia Southern University, destinations in business district of Brooklet.  
 Georgia Southern, downtown, safe cycling, natural world  
 Good question... lots of options in the Savannah area...  
 Goshen road  
 Griffin Lakes  
 Grocery, downtown, brewery  
 GS campus and downtown Brooklet. I would be interested in the full length if the trail if there were places to camp along the route.  
 GSU campus, Brooklet  
 Hamburg  
 Hamburg State Park, Linton Park, Kaolin Park  
 Harris Neck wildlife refuge  
 Historic sites, small town shops  
 Historic Sparta  
 Historical, dining, camping  
 I live in cobb county so probably not applicable  
 I live in Gwinnett but I appreciate when I can hook sidewalk to Path/ trail  
 I ride from Valdosta State University to Lake Park and back. Thus being on State Roads that are dangerous. So to answer your question a nice Twenty to Forty

Mile stretch anywhere in Lowndes County would be nice.

I think between guyton and savannah would be a great connection

I would commute if a safe trail was in place daily

I would just be delighted if the trail could make it to Sylvania.

I would like a way to safely get off Tybee Island on a bike or by running.

I'd like to be able to safely get downtown

In Rincon

In the Clito area or close to Mill Creek.

Inns or bnbs

Jewell

Lake Lanier, mountains

Library, playground, restaurants, shops

Link with the S & S Greenway trail

Little McCall to the grocery store, bakery pond

Midtown SAV to Downtown SAV Safely

Mill Creek Park

Museum, raptor center Brooklet

My capital city and/or the economic engine of my county.

National and State parks

Nature sanctuary, calm, peaceful, meditation environment

Near Gumlog

Nearby cities and parks

Nearby local businesses

No destination long day cycling

No destination, just to be able to get my 20 miles in without traffic

No destinations. Just a safe place to ride or walk.

No Preference

No Trail

No where.

none, just a chance to get out and walk without getting run over.

Not fairmont road

Not sure

Not sure. I live in Savannah. I walk all over on the sidewalks.

Ocean

Ogeechee River

Okefenokee swamp

Oliver

Other communities

Our neighborhood is small and does not have a park. Having a way to bike to a park would be amazing. We live off of midland road.

Park

Park, shopping.

Parks, places with food options and bathroom facilities

Parks, S&S Greenway Trail, Georgia Southern University, Willie McTiel Trail

Pavo, Adel, Moultrie, Valdosta, Berlin, Nashville, Boston, Thomasville

Piedmont Park , Grant Park

Pineora Park, Guyton Elementary

Places to swim, commercial district, places of natural beauty

Playgrounds

Pond

Pooler

Pooler and downtown Savannah area. Maybe tybee

Portal, Downtown Statesboro, and Georgia Southern

Portal, GA. Mill Creek Recreation Ctrl, Statesboro.

Portal, Statesboro, Metter, Brooklet, Rincon, Guyton, Savannah, Swainsboro

Pretoria Station Trailhead THROUGH BROOKLET Ga as was previously proposed, unfortunately voted down.

Probably would just do a loop for exercise.

Public parks, schools, supermarkets

Recreation or shopping

Recreational, Restaurants, and Historical

Restaurants

Richmond hill

Richmond Hill. Fort McCallister Historic Site.

## WHAT DESTINATIONS IN YOUR COUNTY WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET TO ON A TRAIL? (CONTINUED)

Rincon by the ebinezer river

Rincon in Effingham County

Rincon or Springfield

Rincon, Springfield

River

River, streams, quiet park-like area with seating

Savannah

Savannah and coast

Savannah River

Savannah to Tybee island! This will be so good!

Scenic

Schools, parks, playgrounds, grocery or dollar generals

Shoals, shoulderbone mill

Shopping

Siloam

Skidaway state park, Fort Pulaski

South Richmond county

Spanish Moss trees and rivers

Sparta

Sparta, Linton or Jewell

Springfield

Springfield down 119 to Honey Ridge Road

Springfield, Clyo, Ebenezer Creek

Stilson

Suwannee

The Savannah River

To center of downtown Guyton

To parks, downtown, possibly Greenway Trail head

Twin City

Tybee Island / Beach and Downtown from Berwick area

Tybee Island to Savannah Historic District

Warthen, Sville, Tenille, Hamburg, Water Tower-Tennille, WT Railroad,

Warthen,Sandersville, Tennille

Water feature/ food

Water, small towns, eating places

West Chatham YMCA area

What destinations in your county would you like to get to on a trail?

Wilmington Island

Woods

Woods and brew pubs

Work, grocery store

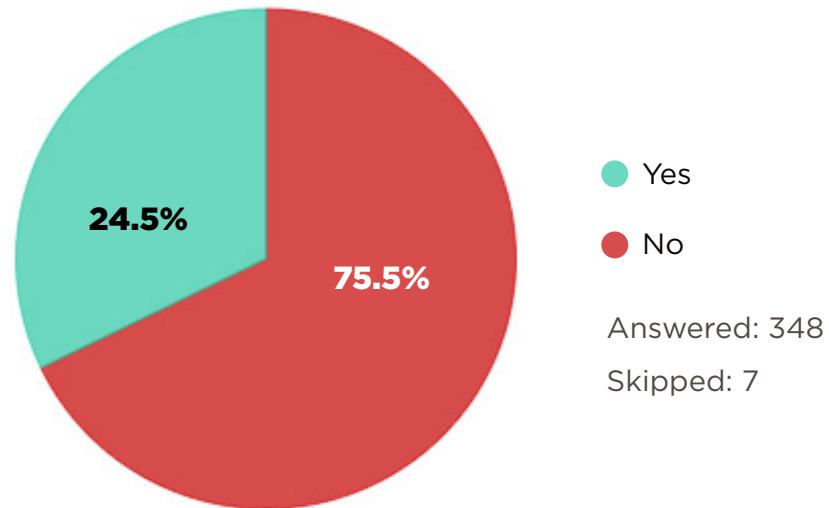
Work; Restaurants, parks

Would like to complete entire trail

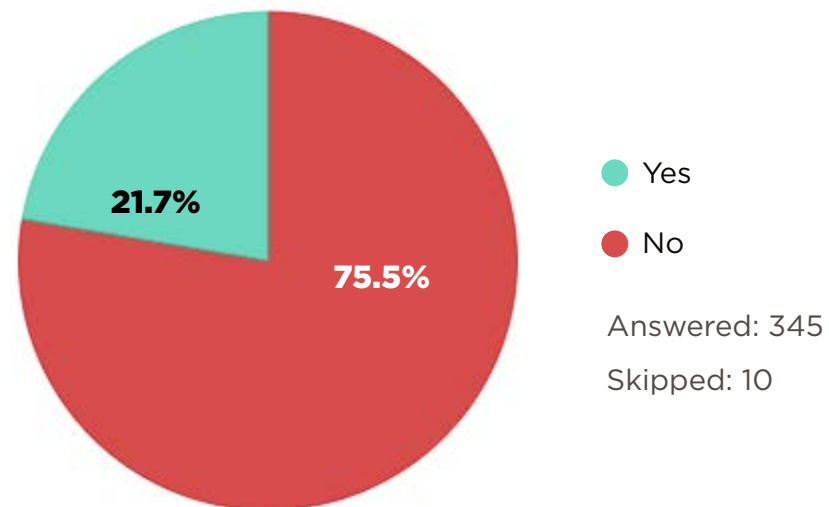


ARE THERE CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN YOUR HOME WHO MIGHT USE A TRAIL?

IF A TRAIL WERE WITHIN 10 MINUTES OF YOUR HOME, HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU USE IT?



IF A TRAIL WERE WITHIN 10 MINUTES OF YOUR HOME, HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU USE IT?



## ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT TRAILS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?

I would love to have a trail in the county as long as it is kept clean and safe from falling limbs and debris.

To coordinate with other organizations for joint functions such as a heritage bike race. Highlighting the local community's history and natural beauty.

I have on many roads in Washington County and have quit riding by myself. Due safety concerns. One friend was killed.

Connectivity to stores, restaurants, and workplaces from residential areas is key, safe separated spaces from vehicle traffic, bringing different communities together

Like the idea for alternate transportation to and from my work

I definitely would access a trail that would extend 119 from Honey Ridge Rd to the City of Guyton onto Springfield in Effingham County .

Very worried about the homeless population using this trail & bringing riffraff along with them near our home.

Love the proposed route thru Springfield, Sparta, and Jewell to the State Park!

"The trail will be an economic development engine for our community. Our greatest economic development asset is historic tourism."

Question about 3rd survey question is the third answer "more" a typo? Did you mean "less" or "less than twice a week?" You can't use a trail more than everyday, can you?

It needs to stay away from private property.

The trail will be a dangerous addition in our area. Our county struggles to keep our roads in good condition, and we have limited access to safety officials. Knowing this, how could we maintain a safe walking trail?

I think it is disrespectful and an abuse of power to take homeowners land, that they paid for to have privacy and put a public trail through it. It opens up their property to possibly

## ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT TRAILS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE? (CONTINUED)

damage, liabilities, assault, and possible death.

I like Sparta to Sholes to Hamburg, to Warthen, to Bay Springs Rd, to Linton Rd. to Sandersville Firehouse. Rest Rooms, secure, rest eat. Thru Sville to 242, to Waco Mills Rd. (Langsdale Land) to Tennille's Chote Water Tower, need restrooms there, stop rest or join group, eat then down Central to WT RR to Wrightsville.

You are letting others onto private land with NO benefit for the land owner. This isn't right.

Taking private land and having a bunch of people going by your house is not right.

Total waste of resources. It should never be funded by taxpayers.

I don't want random people walking by my house. Also, we have bigger issues to address that should take precedence over a walking trail! The conditions of our dirt roads, the pathetic new trash laws, that lack of a decent parks for children throughout the county, the need for an auditorium, etc. People in Wrightsville, Kite, and Adrian are not interested in long distance walking or hiking. Those who enjoy walking usually make use of the track at the school, the sidewalks on 319, or the county maintained roads they live on. And we don't want STRANGERS walking that close to our homes!

No benefit to our community. Cyclist

are usually health food junkies and will not eat at our restaurants, no reputable place to stay in our area, so how will our community benefit financially? If it is forced thru, it will become a nightmare for our law enforcement & community. CRIME is what you are buying into if you support this project!

The only thing I don't like is that I feel very safe in my community and I don't want the trail to bring outsiders from other counties that may not have good intentions right through my little town for no reason except that this trail would give them a path to prowl. However; I love the idea of a path, I think I would prefer a golf cart path over a walking path but I would support a walking/bike path. It would be nice to walk on in the evenings. Unfortunately we don't even have adequate sidewalks in Kite so I would even be happy to have those.

This should not be constructed through non state maintained dirt roads. I do not want outsiders with 24hr access moving through my property. It should follow state roads only.

not needed.

Please no to 1c Dixie rd/Evergreen rd this is my front yard

I think it's a great idea.

I do not feel this trail will be positive for my area. We have more pressing needs in Johnson co than a trail that will open up opportunity for trespassing, drug deals, and destruction of property. Maybe the bikers won't do illegal activities but it will

open up inaccessible areas for criminals/ drug dealers that they previously didn't have access to our area. I don't think this is the answer for Johnson Co residents, money or our county workers. Not in favor of this at all.

We love nature and have trails on our property but would use a local trail for variety

Restrooms / access to water is crucial, critical even. Atleast every 5 miles or so.

Johnson County does NOT need this trail!

I would love to see this trail system completed for many reasons. The biggest reason would be safe riding. I am fearful of cars on my current rides in Chatham County.

Johnson County does not need this trail! I do want random strangers having such easy access to my property. I support economic development, but this idea does not. These people won't be spending enough money in our county to make it beneficial, and who in the hell walks from Athens to Savannah in south GA heat!?!

Connecting communities

Don't discount wealthy businesses that are headquartered here and want to balance out their morally controversial or sometimes iffy environmental reputation with philanthropy, like Title Max (TMX), Georgia Pacific, Colonial Oil, Daniel Defense (local gun maker), Nine Line, DRT (turpentine), as well as some of the more pristine companies like Great Dane,

JCB, Gulfstream, Cannondale bike which have a presence here.

I love cycling on rail trails

“This trail would be coming down our road. we are against this coming onto our property“

They are also valuable for separating cyclists from car/truck traffic.

This is desperately needed in the community. The roads are unsafe for pedestrians and cyclist.

It's great for children to be able to ride without the fear of being hit by cars

Please get more safe biking route in Effingham County.

“We lived near the Springwater trail in Oregon. It was beautiful but without police patrolling it and homeless camps encroaching it became unsafe. Please have strict no camping rules along the trails with enforcement.

A really cool feature of the trail system was access to a large bmx pump track park only accessed by the bike trail. It'd be cool to incorporate access to places not reachable by car. A destination or two hidden in the trail system.”

I used to trail run multiple times a week prior to moving here and not having access to any

Make it senior friendly.

We would love to ride the McQueen trail more, but it is really not suitable for hybrid Trek bikes. It would be more used

if it was crushed stone, asphalt or cement. Hopefully the Hi-Lo trail will be one of those.

Love the opportunity to get out and run longer distance

I've been on the Silver Comet, Stone Mountain and to the trail in Carrollton. Although I am not a huge outdoor enthusiast, I believe there is a need for them in all counties and towns to allow people safe ways to exercise and commute without relying on vehicles. Having moved to Effingham from the Atlanta area, I'm surprised that with the vast amount of land here there hasn't been a trail created before now. The county (and connecting counties) are sorely lacking in this area and it's a disservice to the community.

i just want to avoid traffic, there is not a safe place to ride on the roads in Effingham, I really enjoy riding the wildlife refuges close by as I don't have to worry about being run over and there is plenty to see

I'm an avid cyclist and a board member of the Camden Cycling Club

I would like to see more cycling infrastructure so people can go to the usual destinations around town without fearing car traffic, not just recreational trails.

I'd love to see the trail come right through Harrison. It's walking distance from my house and would be a safe place to walk and ride a bike

Ga is behind other states in access to wall/bike trails. The roads in our area are very unsafe. A greenway trail system would be an amazing way to preserve and protect land and generate heat joy ways to get outdoors

It's long overdue to have a ace to ride out if traffic. Even with the revised 3' law, drivers for the most part are ignorant about.

This is the best idea ever!!!! There has been a great need for something like this for a LONG time!! Hoping this dream comes to fruition.

It should accommodate bikes, e bikes, scooters, and golf carts.

I think there need to be a rail car or train you can get on and trolley

Love this

Be with other senior friends

I'm over 60 and just got an E-bike last year and love it. I just wish we had more trails like Denmark and connected to more retail like the Beltline in Atlanta, that way there would be no need to get in a car for every little trip.

Love them

Having others who were in areas where resistance preceded success of establishing a trail speak to those who are hesitant might help promote successful progression in this matter

I look forward to this being completed! Long distance rides are interesting to me.



## ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT TRAILS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE? (CONTINUED)

Just looking for a safe place to commute and excersice by bicycle. I much prefer Greenways and side paths as opposed to shared use. I personally have been hit twice in the past year in a shared use path. Or atleast safer crossing points and barriers on a shared use path

This can't happen soon enough and so thankful to be a part of making it happen.

A trail along highway 80 on tybee will eliminate the danger that bikers and runners face when they are trying to get on or leave the island.I feel like most residents would appreciate A trail that allows people to get to places like the Crab Shack, Bubba Gumbos, Spanish hammock and the tybee marina from the main island as well. And if it connected to this hi-lo trail that would be awesome. I love this idea because I drive to Athens from tybee a few times a year to get to UGA and I think the many small towns I go through would really benefit from this trail idea. Keep up the Good Work!

Dirt is easier on joints, perhaps gravel

We are so excited about the trail. We can't wait to be able to safely run and ride our bicycles!

"I am a bicycle rider, a long trail, safe from vehicles, would be an ideal place to ride. Though, it may not be down the street from me, taking the time to get out and ride with my kids, getting my wife riding, or even just freeing the mind on 50mi

ride would do wonders for us. I can only speak for myself, but I do believe that promoting the outdoors and providing a beautiful and safe place to do it allows for a sense of community, gives people another option for things to do instead of negative activities, promotes the health of the populace, among a whole host of other benefits. I spent time in the Navy, stationed in Virginia. There I began to frequent The Capital Trail, a trail that stretched from Richmond to Jamestown. On the trail popped up little shops that catered to those on it. I lived an hour and a half away and still made it a priority in my life to go to.

Thank you for listening,  
William Reed"

PLEASE do as many greenways as possible or side paths!!!!!! Shared use is not ideal for walking.....

Will be a great addition to our bike community and the rest of the population in the county. People will feel more secure and intriguing to know the beautiful experience of a save outdoor experience

I may never see it but i really hope others will be able to

A long, car fee trail will enable many activities and encourage countless people to become active. Moreover, long trails encourage multi day trips spreading many dollars of economic funds. Races, organized group rides and runs will bring many people and revenue to all the areas of the trail

Strongly support protecting & planting more trees, to enhance climate resiliency and community wellness. Accessible, safe trails & paths allow more people to enjoy physical, mental & emotional benefits of trees and other natural elements.

Keep up the good work. Wish there was a connection point to middle Georgia.

I would love to see a trail go through Statesboro and continue towards Brooklet. If I could run to it from my house, I would use it every day! Additionally, biking all the way to Athens would be on my bucket list!

I think trails add many qualities to a community. Opportunity to exercise and socialize. It provides esthetic value and enhances property value. There's always a concern about vandalism and crime but I think there are existing resources to mitigate this.

Noel C Conaway Rd is one of the fastest developing areas in Effingham with massive subdivisions like parkwest. I think it would be very beneficial to have the route come through that area due to the population density. I also wouldn't put too large of an emphasis on where the trail is going to. I think the majority of people just want a safe place to go running or riding a bicycle that isn't on a roadway. That currently isn't an option right now

I've ridden many trails across the east coast and think this would be a great addition to the development coming to our destination Georgia community.

Keep plenty of trees for shade along with

benches for breaks

Access to places of natural beauty will increase local use. What facilities will there be for long-distance hiking?

This is an exciting initiative. The economic growth and the health of the people are great incentives.

Who will maintain it?

In Athens-Clarke County the Board of Commissioners declared eminent domain against property owners. They are destroying hundreds of mature trees, demonishing property owner's building, separating their property with the trail and this is their back yards! Most of these property owners are senior citizens in the final stages of their lives and having to deal with this!

Need hiking/backpacking access for people who like to hike and tent in wilderness for multi-day outings. Most routes are suited for bicycles. Multi-modal is good.

I travel 5 hours to trike on trails! 5 states!

The connection shown between Hwy 15 and Fairmont road is a horrible idea. That would cut through and be behind hunting land and make it very unsafe for people to walk through and could accidentally be shot. Plus I would be worried about people camping and trespassing. Probably will just be better if it ran just along Hwy 15 by the school

Terrible idea to cut thru fairmont rd. on private property where there is hunting, this would put the public in danger. Going

thru livestock pastures also would cut off water supply to animals.

Would love to have a safe place to ride where I don't have to worry about cars

I'm really excited to have a great trail one day to ride my bike safely in my local community and explore across Georgia.

I perceive a good "market" for a trail in our community. One thing to consider is how often the trail will be separate/"in nature" vs. perhaps on city/county roads. If on the latter, a specific designation is critical because vehicle operator in this area do not seem to have any regard for cyclist, walkers, etc.

We cannot have too many trails.

Varying terrain, proximity to rivers, lakes, county parks, fruit and produce stands, open air markets, intersections with other hiking and mountain biking trails, and super safe parking lots are all very important.

Ridiculous, especially if tax dollars are spent.

"Trails are a wonderful way to exercise, enjoy nature without having to deal with vehicles and drivers.

I ride the Silver Comet Trail and Roswell AlpharettaForsyth Greenways weekly.

"Built it and they will come""

Terrible idea if it's going to take one bit of tax dollars...plenty of places to ride a bike or hike already!!!!

Would love this!

We oppose this trail.

Can they be horse friendly?

And extensive trail system that avoids urban congestion, yet has access to businesses would be great. Spurs to urban centers/towns would make using the the trail accommodating but still be focused around nature and quiet areas.

We need more trails to prevent accidents with motorists

Moved to Georgia from Ohio where rail trails are plentiful .

We need more trails for everyone. Commuters could get to GSU

Would love to have trail throughout county for family and bicycling

I enjoy walking where it is quiet, but not full of too much wildlife.

Why does this proposed HI-Lo trail not join/follow the trail already in Bulloch county/Statesboro (Willie McTell Trail, etc)?

Dogfriendly,benches along route, lots of natural vegetation

The segment of this trail proposed on Josh Hagin Road going into Brooklet needs to be removed. The residents of this community have overwhelmingly disapproved of similar instances in the past, especially as this would impede active farmland. Brooklet does not want or need the growth, attention, and crime that comes with these trails. Please use

## ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT TRAILS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE? (CONTINUED)

the northern proposed section from Jones Mill Rd, to Bragg Chester, and finally Burkhalter. Leave our little quiet community alone!

This does not need to go down Fannie Brewer Rd. Sincerely a stakeholder!!

#1 amenity in any place I live or choose to visit.

Waste of money that could in a better way !

A leg of the proposed trail comes through my farm via a GA Power right of way. I have strict bio security measures I already have to follow and do not need the additional public traffic this trail would bring through my property. Please do not bring this trail through my farm as it would have costly and detrimental impacts on my operation.

You already know these trails will be overflowing with people on electric bikes, why not make them motorcycle friendly too!

Silly idea. We can't even finish our local trail to Brooklet. I don't want my taxes to go up to pay for and maintain a trail.

Tremendous asset to the communities along the trail.

Trails benefit communities in many ways, and should be integrated as much as possible to help balance out the ever increasing traffic in small towns and cities

Brooklet and Bulloch county needs this trail.

I live in Brooklet and have to DRIVE to access the Statesboro trailheads. I do this at least 3-4 times a week! The days I'm not driving to a trailhead, at least one of the other members of my household is! I would LOVE having walkable/bikeable access nearby. We are an active household and would use the trail not only for recreation and exercise but also as a car-free way of going about our daily errands and business. Please bring progress to Brooklet!

I fully support a connected system of trails suitable for cycling, walking, and running. Such a system would boost property values and encourage positive community interaction.

"I've used greenways for over 20 years, on an almost daily basis for most of those years. I've used them primarily for exercise and dog walking but have also enjoyed them as a safe place to enjoy nature.

These greenways are very popular and highly desirable. I believe everyone should have easy access to some type of trail/greenway. If a trail connects to schools and businesses it's also a healthy and climate friendly alternative to driving."

Tremendous opportunity for multipurpose usebiking, walking, running, etc. for all ages

I've ridden trails all over the nation and always found them to be a great community resource. I'd love to help make

this trail happen. Please let me know what I can do.

No

Quit wasting taxpayers' dollars on hardly used trails. Just lower taxes if we have that much money to waste. We already have plenty of trails through Statesboro.

Statesboro needs more trails to encourage outdoor active lifestyle.

The .75 mile offroad route that connects Greensboro Hwy. (2d) near M.E. Lewis Elementary School to Fairmont Rd. (2a) in Hancock County goes through private property. This is not safe for property owners or for walkers/riders. It would also provide an unmonitored avenue for children to walk from their school to a very close proximity to the Hancock County Recreation Park. This is another safety issue... small children will thoughtlessly take the route believing they are safe because it is a "trail". However, it is a wooded area and it would be an secluded enough place for someone with ill intent to wait on a young child or any individual who may not be paying enough attention to their surroundings. There are endless safety concerns here but in summary, having strangers walking through another stranger's property can never be assumed to be safe in these times.

I want the trail to come through Brooklet. The same people who voted against the greenway trail here, drive to walk on it in Statesboro. It should come through Brooklet.



Don't like that the trail would be cutting through people's private property

Keep the trail as free from commercial or residential development as possible.

"On the Atlanta Beltline, eventually, it's own success will be its downfall.

Persons on motorized skateboards and high powered e-bikes, who wrecklessly speed through the throng of pedestrians, small children on bikes, other electric inexperienced motorized scooters, and owners with their pets, are going to take someone's life. NOT if, but when. "

Why isn't our tax money being used to improve our roads?

Would be great to have the trail be a long greenspace and have it connect to greenspaces throughout the county, including urban trails that desperately need greenspace to combat heat island effects and pollution while offering an alternative option to driving.

Please connect to Atlanta

Big Creek Greenway and Cumming City Center do a beautiful job of combining natural landscape and safe places for families to hangout and exercise. The parks connect and the paths are huge for bikes and people to walk with pets.

I love this idea!!

I think it might be good to float this plan in ultrarunning groups on different social media platforms and podcasts.

Added park locations and sightseeing locations along trails. Trails monitoring by

some form of law enforcement especially since women with children will be using them alone at times.

It should be well marked.

This is so needed, very excited to make this happen. Great opportunity for exercise and alternative way to travel to other towns, in a safe venue!

My husband and I are runners. Having a safe path to run on near our home. We have ran on other trails in other states and truly enjoyed it.

This sounds like an amazing opportunity for smaller local trails along the way to connect to a longer trail.

A paved trail for biking/running would be ideal. I used the silver comet trail in Marietta before. Something like that here would be ideal. There needs to be public parking with restrooms and water at certain intervals.

I've only seen positive impacts from trails, anyone hesitant or non supportive should visit existing ones and see for themselves.

As a transportation planner who is a part-time resident of Bulloch County (but based in Atlanta), I think this would be a great addition to the community. My family owns property just west of Statesboro, and many times when I visit, I bike along county roads. While some are safer than others, a trail would be more accommodating for different groups of people.

I love them. Excited to see how this trail develops! I am originally from Jefferson

Co. and think it's really great that this trail would be promoting rural counties.

Thank you for making this trail.

"Consider converting old railroad lines to trails.

"" Rails to trails """"

I love the bike trails. A safe place to ride for exercise a no d pleasure. Georgia does not have enough of them.

I think trails bring so much to a community and makes it a better place to live

Trails keep cyclists safe

Love them

I would like a vehicle free path from Springfield to Guyton so it is safe for pedestrians and cycling.

Please connect metro Atlanta (Gwinnett & Forsyth counties) to the trail. It would provide access to financial resources from these affluent areas and link many areas that are currently car dependent.

I think the question about younger people should be asking terms of the trail, even though we don't have kids. There are two schools on the other side of our neighborhood and I think kids could use that area as a safe space if it were done correctly and thereby stay out of the roads with the increasing numbers of trucks and traffic in front of the schools, and at the roundabout where we live.

We need trails in Effingham county. So little is available to get out and enjoy nature. I currently have to drive into

## ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT TRAILS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE? (CONTINUED)

Savannah to places like Skidaway Island in order to enjoy a nature trail.

my husband and I used to ride the katy trail in Missouri. we would join every memorial weekend a bike ride called the peddlers jamboree. It featured bands help the economy and all the little towns that we would stop at as well as hotels because it went for a weekend. Every 5 miles or so there was a band playing music food and beer being sold also water Phillips. It was good clean fun and also getting some exercise and an event we look forward to every year. we would also meet our friends there just to do a 70 mile ride spend the night and ride back to our cars. Made great memories and I hope the state of Georgia does the same so we can participate in spend our money in the small towns to help them.

this trial does not need to go on or near Fannie brewer road in Emanuel county. that road is not safe, drugs are dealt on that road. i have lived in twin city my whole life and can tell you that is not a safe route.

I like multi use trails with lane identification

Having a trail would be great. Not having decent bike lanes on the road makes it dangerous so having a trail close by would be amazing. Need entrepreneurs to add cafes on route!

yes, I think naming the whole trail one

name would be more appealing. firefly trail name would be more interesting especially with children but also with adults. definitely names are important in marketing the trail to draw interest.

Please bring this to Georgia. There is so much need for families to get outside and this a great way to provide that

The Silver Comet Trail is local to me and I use it all the time. I think these types of trails should be everywhere. They make life better.

“1. More! Connect the Silver Comet to Hi-Lo for bike touring and bikepacking.  
2. Safe camping nearby  
3. Connect them to local commerce and govt spots. “

We love the Greenway in Statesboro and would love to see it expanded to offer more miles for running, walking, and cycling.

Recent plans to expand the S&S Greenway in our county were voted down by local landowners in Brooklet who don't want the trail passing near their places of residence. Planners need to convey the benefits of the proposed trail such as increased property values. Liability concerns, although unfounded, are likely to be an issue as well. Recreational use statues may be useful when working with private landowners.

I'm grateful you are doing this! I've been so jealous of South Carolina and all the trails they have.

Plans for extending the Greenway

Trail in Bulloch County were halted by disgruntled residents of Brooklet, GA, whose opinions were somehow more important than the already approved and grant-winning rails-to-trails design. The county wanted it and voted for it, and it should have happened. Please make it a reality! The trails are wonderful and make areas better places to live.

Please do this! This will be so good for so many reasons exercise, community, tourism, a safe way to bicycle from city to city, etc. this is a no-brainer

Toads are unsafe and drivers are untrained or unaware of road usages therefore more trail. more safe passages for cyclist and runners...

Does this trail have to be paved? Could it initially open as gravel/dirt like other rails-to-trails in other states and regions? Need to promote the economic benefits the trail will produce

I walk and bike every day, a local trail would be great and even better to bike for long distance on weekends. I look forward to this

Great way to be in nature with no car needed

Make it plenty wide... will it be lit? Good luck... thanks for working on something like this in southeast ga...

I think that when many trails are being built it isn't understood that trails have to go where people want to go. The trail has to go by businesses and by homes from which people can come from.

I am an avid cyclist. I ride between 150-300 miles a week. A road separated trail like the Hi-Lo, would be a perfect place to ride without fear of being taken out by a careless or angry driver. I ride the roads in Henry, Spalding, and Butts counties. I have lost one close friend to a careless driver, Dr John Harsh, May he rest in peace. I have also had multiple other friends struck by a vehicle. The best solution for cyclists are trails where there is a physical separation from motor traffic. Thank you for the opportunity to offer my perspective.

I understand there isn't a large cycling community in South Georgia. And I'm sure it's because there is no safe way to transition the area. Everyone I know rides the back roads and hopefully won't die for the experience. Bike lanes and or widened shoulders would be helpful. I contacted the county when 41 was paved and asked about the easement and adding a shoulder. Crickets! South Georgia does not plan for cycling. I can't safely go 1.5 miles for a coffee on a Sunday. I'm from Florida and have been riding for a number of years. They have restaurants that cater to cycling rides and sell gallons of coffee. We have nothing.

It's important to establish e-bikes and e-scooter safety policies

I live in Central Florida for most of the Year and we have several Trails. They have been financial Gold Mines for the Communités in which they are located.

Great idea and I can't wait

Please bring this trail to Brooklet

This is outstanding

Provide clean restrooms and locations to buy snacks and drinks

Ebikes permitted with 750 watt maximum based on increasing popularity of ebikes.

Too much traffic on the roads. I look for and bike trails like this every time I cross one.

This would be amazing!

No

Current trails too short and not linked with each other.

I'm a 66 year old who has lived all around the world and I've used many different trails, some great and others not so much. But when I moved back to Georgia in 2013, I realized how much I missed the opportunity to use a trail at any time and I had started taking them for granted because they were nearly everywhere! (Except here).

"Statesboro is less than five miles wide. We need safe routes to get to all the cool and useful places in the city.

Bulloch County is beautiful but has no public access to nature. A trail would really help.

It's long overdue, we've needed a place to ride that is away from traffic. Just looping a neighbor hood is boring.

I'm thrilled about this my town I grew up in had bike paths throughout the entire

city and was used by everyone

More trails!!!

Provide distance info wildlife info historical info emergency info closest town

I wish the proposed trail would come through Rincon and Springfield, GA! I think this is a great idea!

I've done trails in several states. I love the opportunity to ride without the fear of cars and enjoy the nature.

Living in savannah GA, i'm learning about all the differences from other places that we aren't exposed to and i would love the opportunity to explore more. I don't always have the correct transport so this gives me another options to use and not my car.

Having a safe place to go for long bike rides and long runs would be the most advantageous for my lifestyle.

I've always wanted to experience more trails. More of the outdoors, away from noisy traffic.

Love trails and having the opportunity to be away from noise and traffic. No worries about safety. Would love a trail through the state.

THIS WOULD BE ANOTHER SPOT FOR ILLEGAL DRUG ACTIVITIES AND GANG HANGOUTS. THE RURAL AREAS AROUND HARRISON AND TENNILLE ARE ALREADY POORLY MONITORED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT. THIS WILL ONLY ADD TO THIS PROBLEM



## ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT TRAILS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE? (CONTINUED)

I just hope that the naysayers and overly negative individuals in many of the smaller towns don't cause a derailment of the plan/route.

I hope that you will consider adding easy ways to get to the trail in Savannah as traffic can be heavy on the south side.

Wondering if I can start in Savannah and go north?

bike trails are great way to keep cyclist safe away from vehicles. I got hit on hwy 204 4 miles on the west side of the Ogeechee River at 55 mph. A man alone on the road on his bike is easy prey. Cyclist are not safe on Georgia Roads without a proper bicycle lane.

"I am a bikepacker in Georgia who encourages low impact travel by bicycle. I enjoy visiting & learning if historical sites, interesting communities, unique dining & meeting people on the way. Preference is for camping; but a few hotels (or similar) along the way is OK.

I believe there is a large, untapped potential for bicycle tourism in the Southeast. This proposed trail, if done right, might a catalyst to grow the sport, and provide economic benefits for communities along its route. Safe parking on either end is a must, and provisions for camping, even if primitive, encouraged "

I think a walking/nature trail would be a great addition to the county!!!! We've

been wanting this for years!!

Bike paths. Swimming pools, basketball, soccer fields, gyms to workout. We have been wanting it for years.

Amazed that this is happening and super excited to have more green space

Incorporating Richmond Hill in some capacity would be excellent.

## CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE?

Responses	Count
Bulloch, Statesboro, 30458	18
Bulloch, Statesboro, 30458	15
Effingham, Rincon, 31326	14
Bulloch, Brooklet, 30415	11
Effingham, Guyton, 31312	11
Bulloch County, Statesboro, 30461	10
County	8
Bulloch, Statesboro, 30461	6
Effingham Guyton 31312	6
31049	5
Town	4
31326	4
Johnson, Wrightsville, 31096	3
31401	3
31082	3
30642	3
Wrightsville	3
Statesboro	2
Oliver, Ga	2
Hancock, Sparta, 31087	2
Guyton	2
Greene, Greensboro, 30642	2
Chatham, Savannah, 31407	2
Chatham, Savannah, 31405	2
Bulloch	2

Responses	Count
Clarke Athens 30606	2
Pooler	2
31419	2
31407	2
31087	2
30606	2
30605	2
30043	2
30033	2
29927	2
2	2

1

1, Ebenezer 31326

1. Bulloch 2. Clito 3. 30461

1. Bulloch 2. Statesboro 3. 30458

1. Bulloch County 2. Statesboro 3.30461

1. Chatham 2. Savannah 3. 31404

1. Chatham, 2. Port Wentworth, 3. 31407

1. Effingham 2. Rincon 3. 31326

1. Forsyth 2. Cumming 3. 30534

207 Wood Valley Cir, Statesboro GA  
30458

29902

29910

29927

29927

30024

30032

30043

30092

30096

30341

30471

30473

30525

30546

30601

30620

30813

30901

31035

31045

31089

31096

31217

31302-8535

31329

31411

32097

33334

95003

Athens-Clarke County 30606

Atlanta 30318

Augusta

Baldwin, milledgeville, 31061

Bluffton, SC 29910

Braselton 30548

Brooklet

Bryan county, richmond hill, 31324

Bryan, Richmond Hill, 31324

Bulloch County 30415

Bulloch county between statesboro and  
register

Bulloch county near the intersection of us  
119 and Mud rd.

Bulloch County, Portal GA, 30450

Chatham

Chatham Co, Garden City, 31408

Chatham County 31401

Chatham county savannah 31419

Chatham Savannah 31406

Chatham, Bloomingdale, 31302

Chatham, Savannah, 31401

Chatham, Savannah, 31405

Chatham, Savannah, 31405

Chatham, Savannah, 31406

Chatham, Savannah, 31407

Chatham, Savannah, 31407

Chatham, Savannah, 31411

## CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE?

Chatham, Savannah, 31419  
 Chatham, Talahi Island, 31410  
 Chatham, Wilmington Island, 31410  
 Chatham/ Savannah/ 31405  
 Chatham/Savannah/31419  
 CLARKS HILL, SC 29821  
 Clayton Co. JONESBORO ,30236  
 Cobb 30067  
 Cobb, Smyrna, 30082  
 Columbia County, Harlem, 30814  
 Cool, Marietta 30067  
 County 31312  
 County, Wrightsville, 31096  
 COUNTY,Near Denmark Community  
 Coweta County  
 coweta, newnan, 30265  
 DeKalb County , Decatur 30033  
 Douglas, Douglasville, 30135  
 Duluth  
 Dunwoody 30338  
 Effingham  
 Effingham , Rincon 31326  
 Effingham / Guyton / 31312  
 Effingham between Rincon and  
 Springfield 31326

Effingham County 21/2 miles west of the  
 city of Guyton 31312  
 Effingham county, Guyton (outside of city  
 limits) 31312  
 Effingham county, melderim area 31302  
 Effingham unincorporated but in south  
 Guyton area 31312  
 Elbert, Elberton, 30635  
 Emanuel County  
 Emanuel, midville 30441  
 EmanuelSwainsboro 30401  
 Evans, Ga 30809  
 Fayette, Peachtree City, 30269  
 Forsyth Co, Cumming Ga, 30041  
 Fulton Atlanta 30316  
 Fulton Roswell 30075  
 Fulton, Sandy Springs, 30350  
 George Town Savannah  
 Glynn, Saint Simons Island , 31522  
 Greene County Greensboro 30642  
 Greene, Greensboro, 30642  
 Greene, Greensboro, 30642  
 Greene, Siloam, 30665  
 Greene, White Plains, 30678  
 Guyton 31312.... Near downtown  
 Guyton, Effingham County  
 Guyton, GA 31312

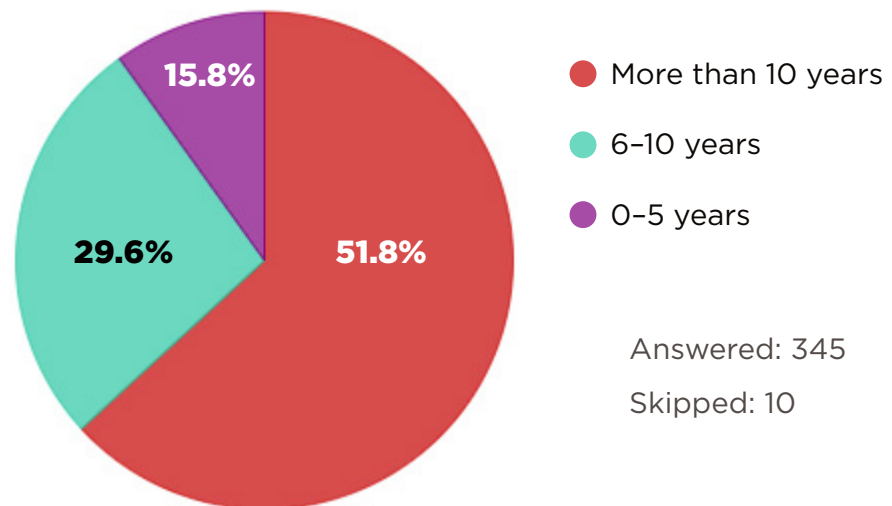
Gwinnett Lawrenceville 30043  
 Gwinnett 30024  
 Gwinnett, Grayson, 30017  
 Hancock  
 Hancock Co Sparta Ga 31087  
 Hancock county sparta 31087  
 Hancock Sparta 31087  
 Hancock Sparta. 31087  
 Hancock, Jewell, 31045  
 Hancock, Sparta, 31087  
 Hancock, Sparta, 31087  
 Hancock, Sparta, 31087  
 I currently live outside of LaGrange GA,  
 but I own property in Twin City.  
 In town in Kite.  
 Jackson, Arcade, 30549  
 Johnson County 31096  
 Just county  
 Kite, GA  
 Laurens county, Dublin southwest rural  
 area, 31021  
 Liberty, Hinesville, 31313  
 Live in Sparta  
 Lowndes county, Lake Park Ga, 31636  
 Lowndes Valdosta 31602  
 Lumpkin Co 30533  
 McIntosh County, Townsend, 31331



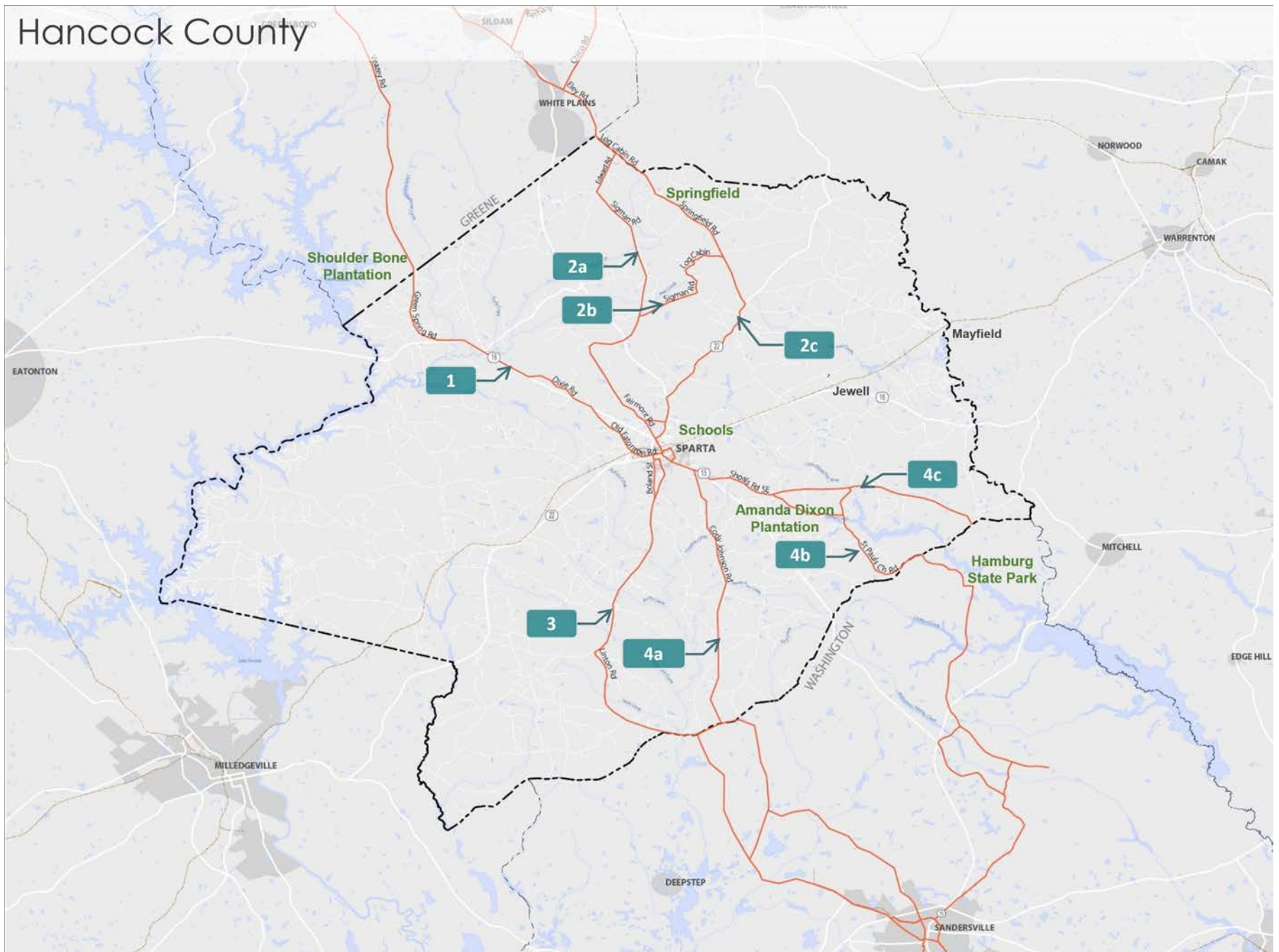
MI  
 Monroe ga 30656  
 Muscogee Columbus 31906  
 Na  
 Newton, Covington, 30016  
 Northeast Gwinnett  
 Orange County, FL and Valdosta,  
 GALowndes 31602  
 Paulding. Dallas. 30132  
 Perry, GA 31069  
 Portal, GA 30450  
 Putnam,Eatonton 31024  
 Rayle Ga 30660  
 Richmond Hill  
 Richmond Hill, 31324  
 Roswell, GA 30075  
 Sandersville  
 savannah Ga 31410  
 Savannah, Chatham Cty, 31419  
 SAVANNAH, GA 31406  
 Savannah, Skidaway Island, Chatham  
 County, 31411  
 Screven, Sylvania, 30467  
 Siloam  
 Spalding County, Griffin, 30223  
 Sparta GA,  
 Sparta. Fairmont and hwy 15

St Johns county, St Johns Florida 32259  
 St. Marys, GA  
 Statesboro Ga  
 Statesboro/Bulloch/30458  
 Toombs  
 Twin City  
 twin city ga  
 Washington County  
 Washington County 31035  
 Washington county, Harrison, 31035  
 Washington County, Tennille, 31089  
 Washington,Sandersville.31082  
 Winder Ga  
 Wrightsville, Johnson Co, 31096

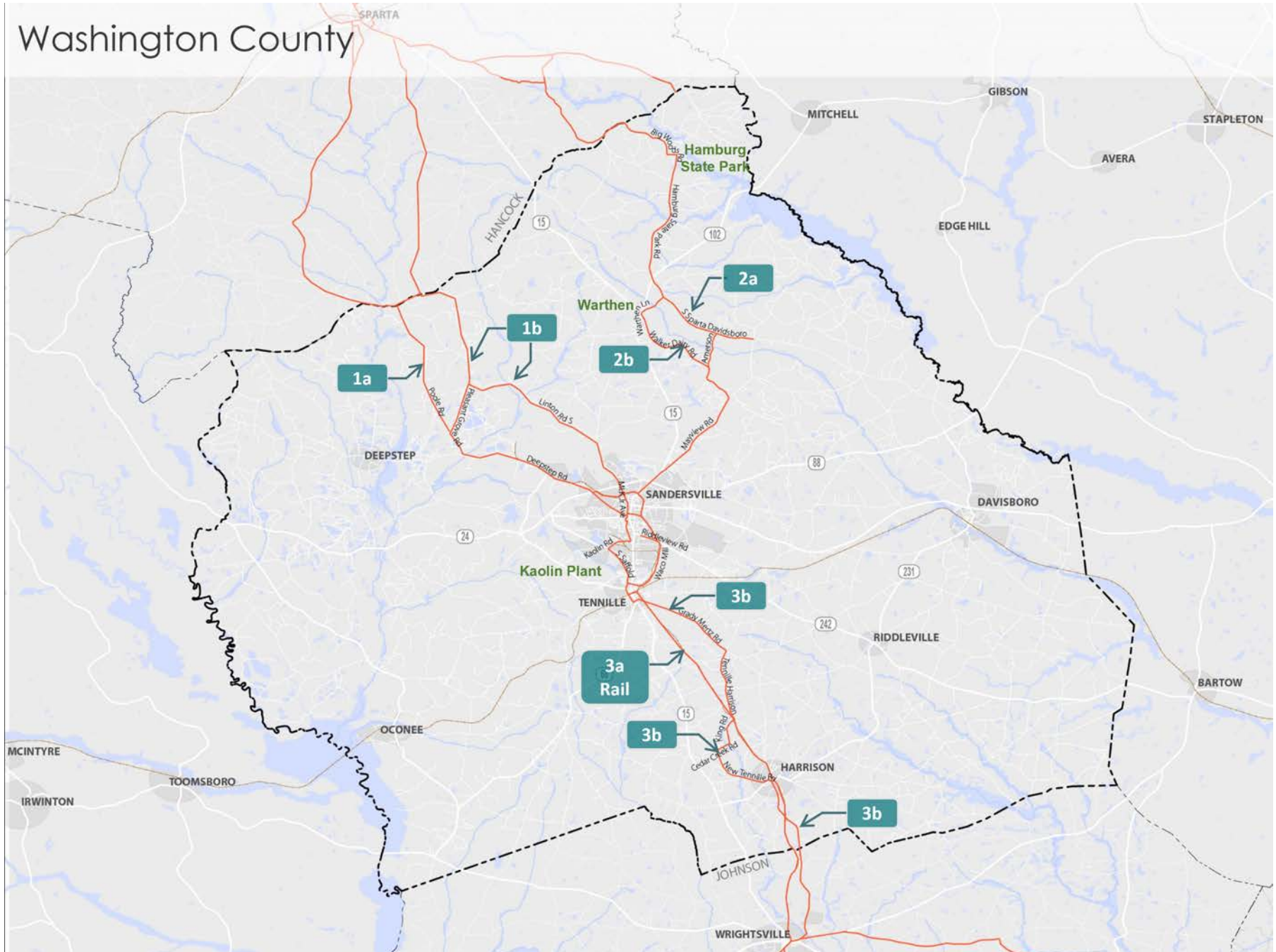
#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED THERE?



# POTENTIAL TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES (ALIGNMENTS EXPLORED BUT NOT ADVANCED AT THIS TIME)

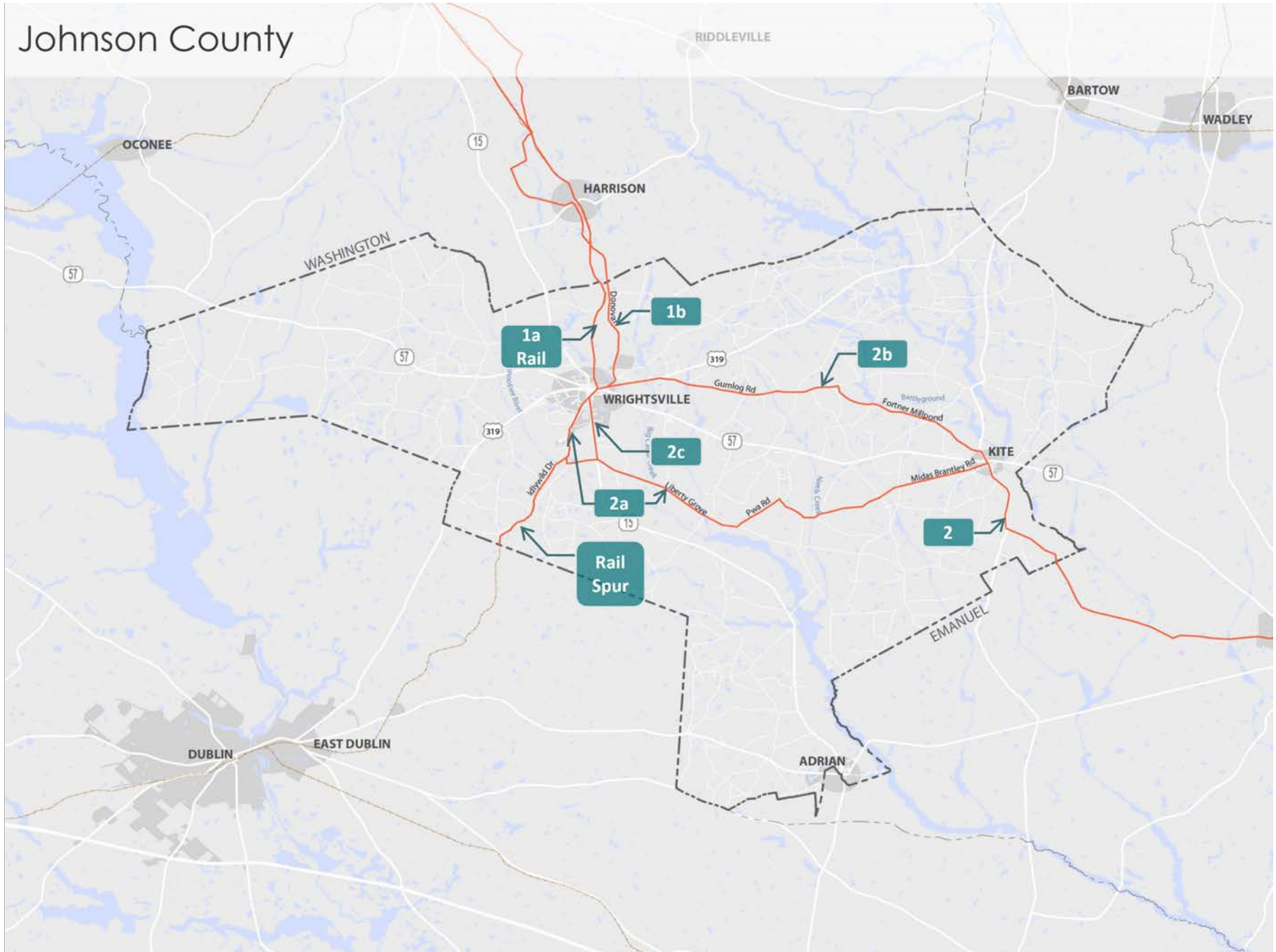


# Washington County

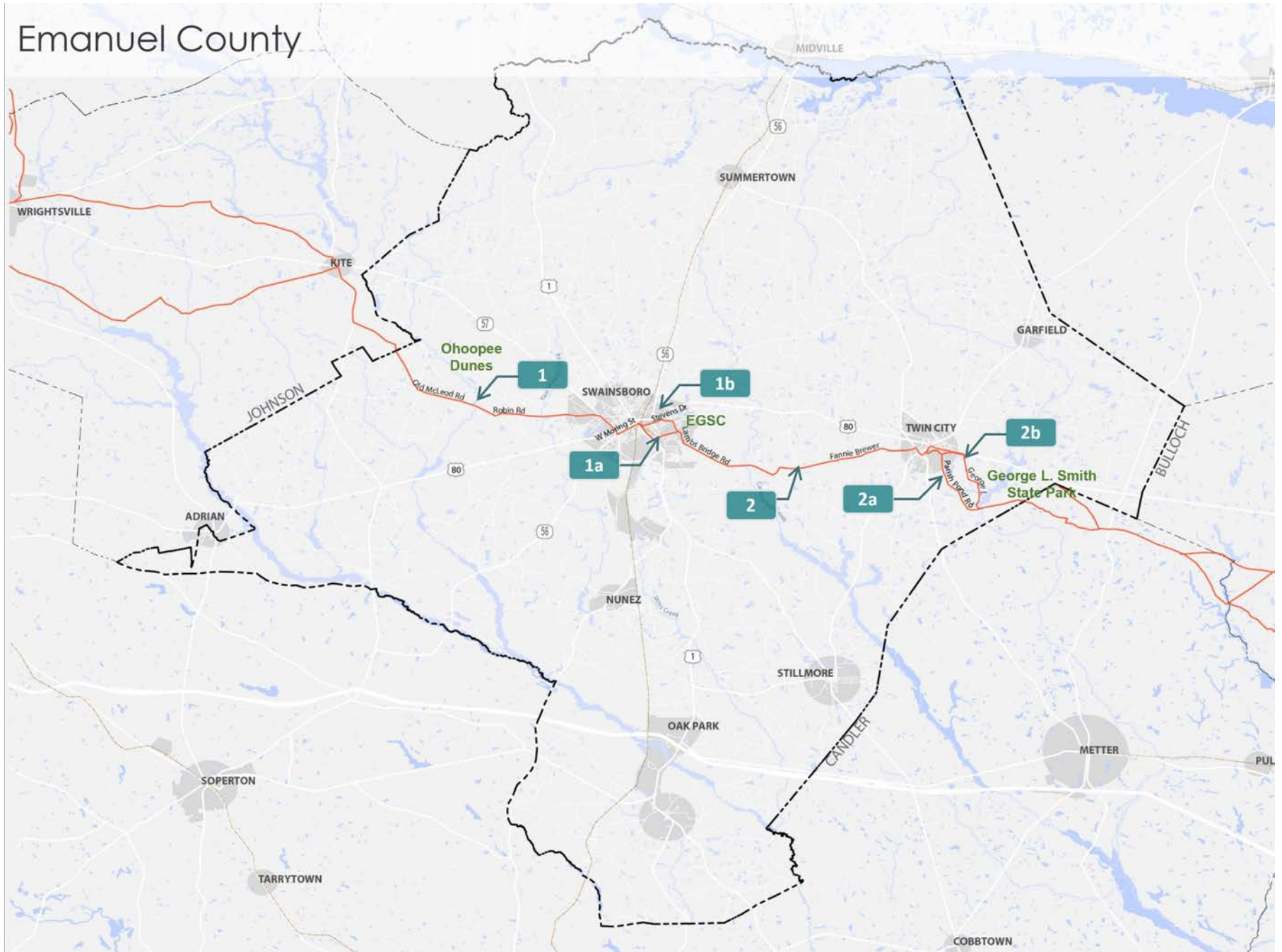




# Johnson County

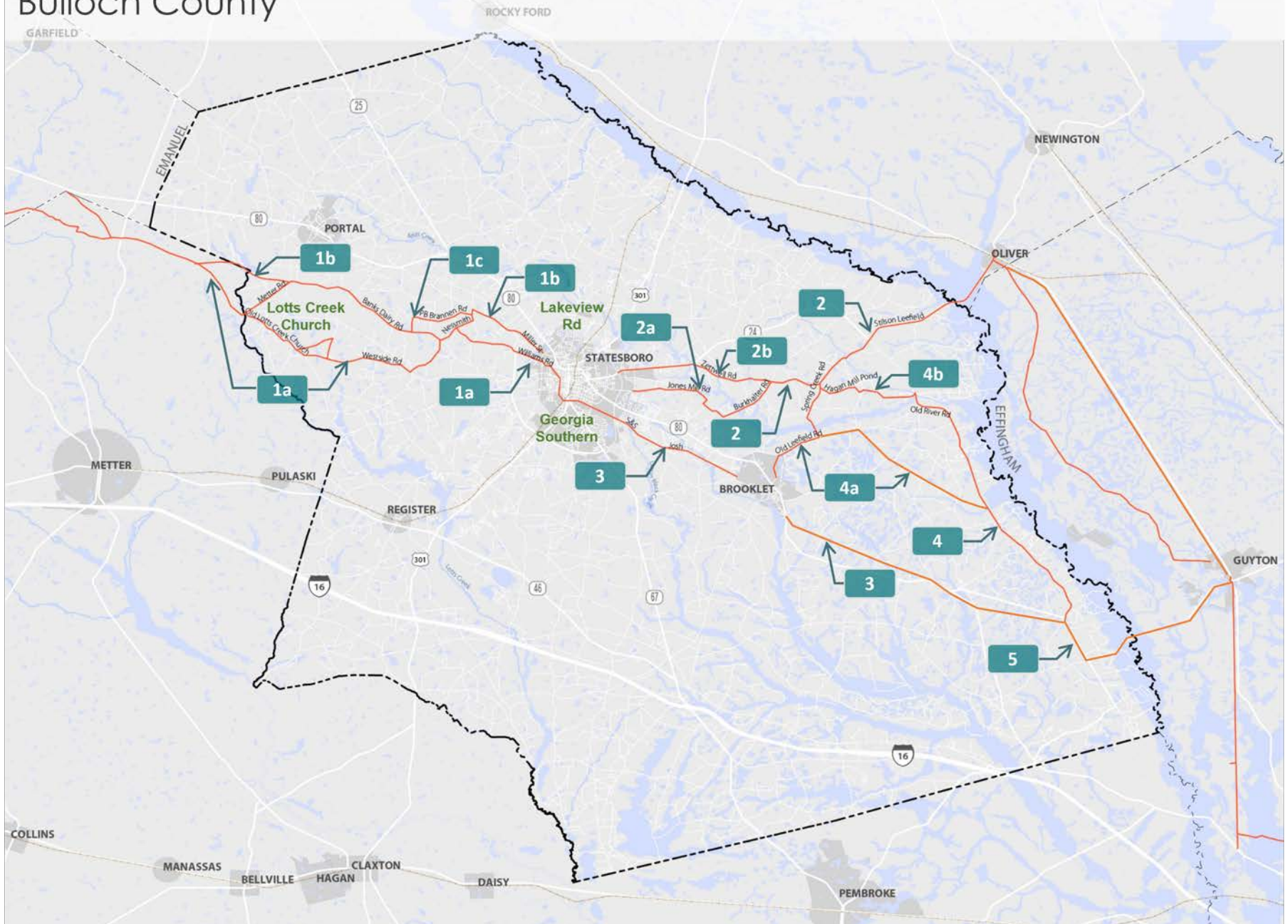


# Emanuel County



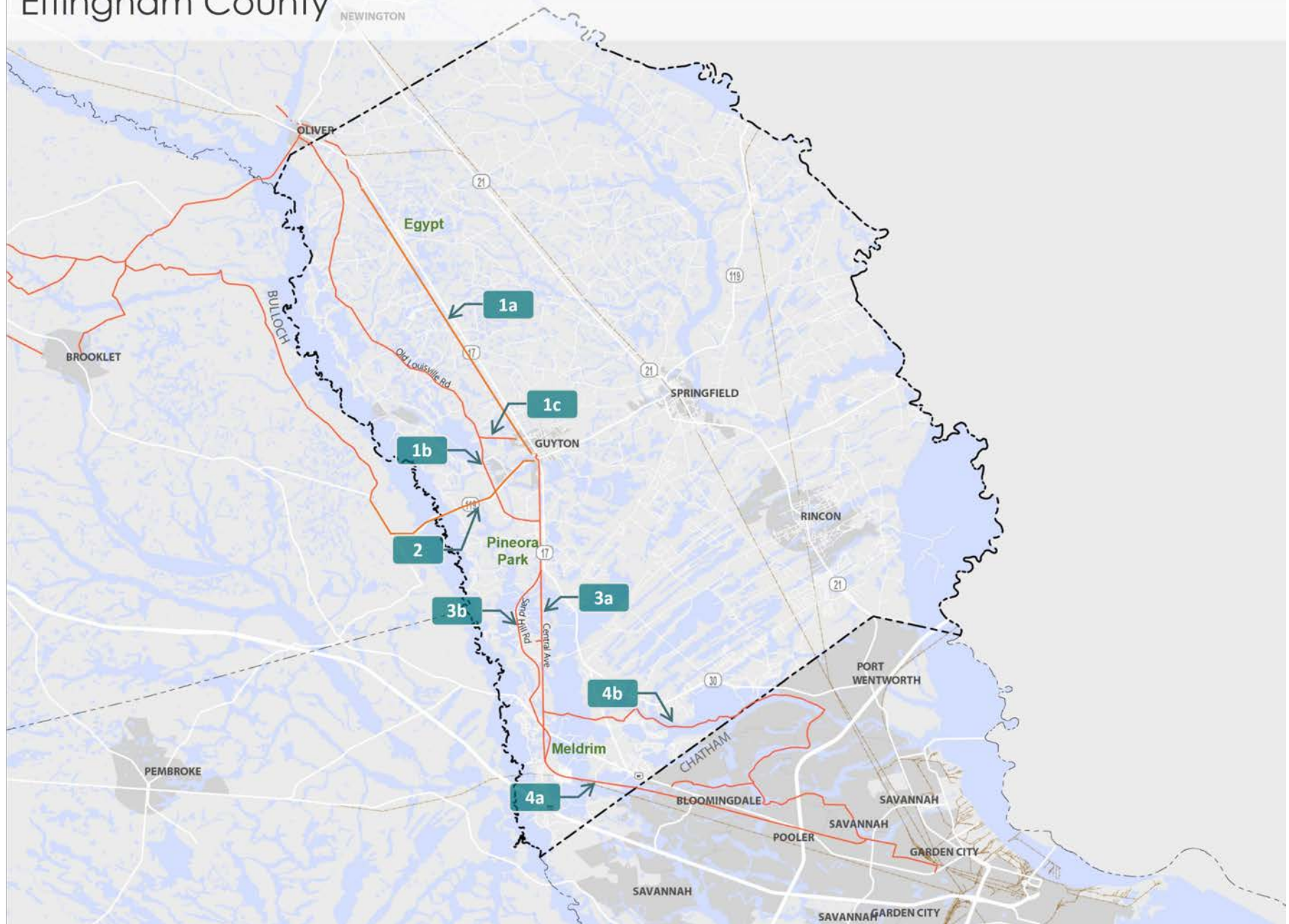


# Bulloch County

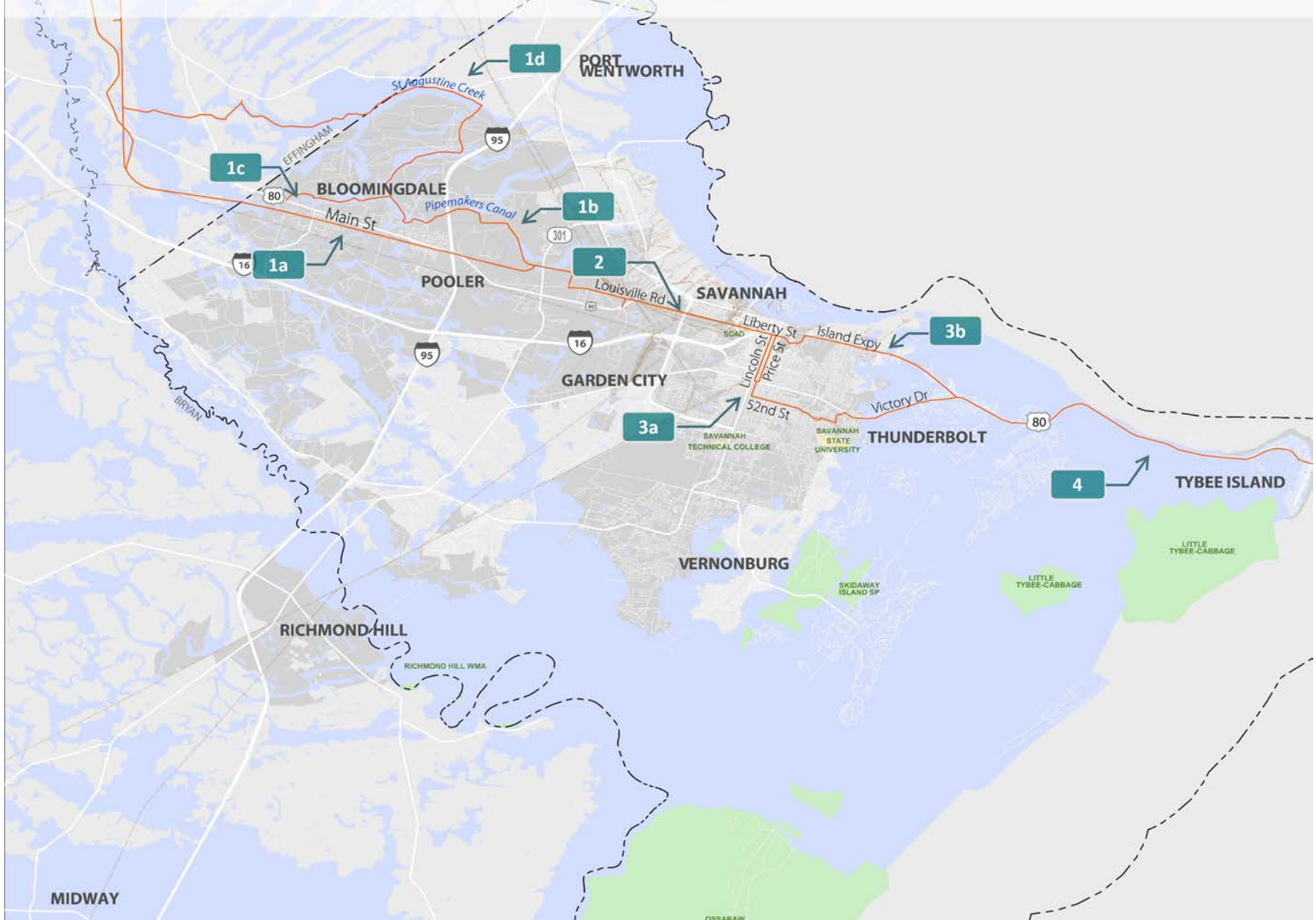




# Effingham County



# Chatham County and Georgia Hi-Lo Alignment Options





# GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAILS ON GEORGIA POWER TRANSMISSION RIGHT-OF-WAYS

General guidelines\* for placement of bicycle and pedestrian trails within GPC's transmission rights-of-way are set forth below.

Applicants will be required to enter into a written agreement for use of the right-of-way for a trail. Please note that the agreement for use may include additional terms not set forth in the below guidelines.

1. Scope of Use: Trails may only be used for or pedestrian use. No motorized vehicles are permitted.
2. Location: Trails must be located at least 25' from any GPC facility or equipment, including without limitation poles, guy wires and towers. Applicant must submit to GPC an engineered drawing prepared by a licensed engineer or surveyor identifying the proposed location of the trail, and the width and length of the trail on the right-of-way with respect to property lines and structures. Once approved, no changes may be made to the location of the trail without GPC's prior written approval.
3. Required Consents:
  - a. Applicant may not make any improvements without GPC's prior written consent.
  - b. Where GPC owns the right-of-way in fee simple, Applicant must obtain written consent from the property owners located immediately adjacent to GPC's right-of-way. Applicant must obtain GPC's consent to any documents used in connection with such third-party consent, and such consent must be obtained at Applicant's sole cost and expense. Applicant is responsible for determining who holds title to the property immediately adjacent to GPC's right-of-way.
  - c. Where GPC has easement rights for the right-of-way, Applicant must determine who holds title to the underlying fee simple property and must obtain an Easement from such property owner(s). Applicant must obtain consent by GPC to any documents used in connection with such easement, and such consent must be obtained at Applicant's sole cost and expense.
  - d. Applicant is responsible for obtaining any necessary city, county, state and/or federal permits.
4. Surface Material: The composition of surface material used for the trail is subject to GPC's prior written approval. The trail must be constructed in accordance with Georgia Department of Transportation roadway specifications such that it is of a strength sufficient to withstand passage of GPC's construction and maintenance vehicles and equipment.
5. Landscaping: Proposed landscaping must be shown on the drawing submitted to GPC. Only landscaping approved in advance by GPC may be installed on the right-of-way. No shrubbery or trees are permitted that are capable of exceeding fifteen feet (15') in height at maturity.
6. Signage: All necessary signage must be installed by Applicant at its sole expense, and is subject to GPC's prior written approval. Signage may not exceed fifteen feet (15') in height or be located within the wire zone. Applicant is required to post opening and closing hours of the trail.
7. Outdoor Lighting: The installation of outdoor lights along the path of the trail is subject to GPC's prior written approval. Outdoor lights must be owned and maintained by an electrical utility. Installations may not exceed fifteen feet (15') in height or be located within the wire zone. Applicant will be responsible for the cost of installing and maintaining outdoor lights.
8. Environmental: Applicant must abide by all local, state and federal laws regarding wetlands, protected species and stream buffer protection. Applicant must install and maintain the trail using environmental best management practices to ensure proper erosion control. Applicant may not place any hazardous



material on the right-of-way.9. Construction, Maintenance and Repairs: Applicant is responsible for constructing, maintaining and repairing the trail at its sole cost and expense. GPC retains the right to temporarily or permanently prohibit or restrict access to all or any portion of the trail and is not responsible for any damage to the landscaping, trails or paths caused by or resulting from exercise of any rights by GPC. Neither the trail nor its use may at any time inhibit GPC's access to the right-of-way, including without limitation during construction of the trail, making landscape improvements, and installation of signs and/or lighting. Mechanical grade work during installation must not impact the ground grid located on the right-of-way. Applicant must notify GPC of the construction schedule and the equipment that will be used during construction.

10. General Cleanliness: Applicant will be responsible for routine removal of trash and debris, and for routine maintenance of landscaping along the trail. Alternatively, Applicant may enter into an agreement with the City or County in which the trail is located, whereby the City or County agrees to be responsible for the foregoing.

11. Termination of Agreement: The agreement for use is subject to termination upon the following:

- a. if, at any time, GPC deems it necessary to have the unrestricted use of the right-of-way for current or future needs;
- b. trail is not constructed within 2 years;
- c. trail is not maintained in a condition acceptable to GPC;
- d. general cleanliness along the path of the trail is not acceptable to GPC;
- e. trail is utilized for purposes outside the scope of the agreement with GPC.

Either party may terminate the agreement with 30 days' written notice. In the event of termination, Applicant will have 60 days to remove all improvements from the right-of-way and restore the right-of-way to its original condition, all at Applicant's sole cost and expense. If the improvements are

not removed within 60 days, GPC may remove them and bill Applicant, and Applicant must make full payment GPC within 30 days from the date of the invoice.

12. Insurance: Applicant must at all times maintain general liability insurance in an amount determined by GPC. GPC must be named as an additional insured by policy holder.

13. Liability: Use of the right-of-way by Applicant will be at its sole risk and expense, and GPC must be specifically relieved of any liability for injury to persons or damage to property resulting from the use of the right-of-way. Applicant must covenant not to sue GPC and must indemnify GPC for all claims associated with Applicant's use.

14. Retention of Land Rights: GPC will retain all of its property rights, whether granted to it by written deeds or easements, or obtained by prescription.

### **GEORGIA POWER GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR TRAIL INSTALLATION ON RIGHT-OF-WAY\***

1. All gravel access spurs/roads shall comply with the typical access road section detail and written specifications (attached). The minimum inside turning radius required is 50'. Maximum longitudinal slope is 16%. Maximum cross slope is 2%.

2. Trail shall be constructed with heavy duty concrete capable of supporting commercial vehicles and construction equipment. All concrete materials and placement should conform to applicable GDOT specifications. GDOT approved jointed portland cement concrete mix minimum depth of 7 inches with a minimum compressive strength of 4000 psi and a minimum 28-day flexural strength (modulus of rupture) of at least 600 pounds per square inch, based on three point loading of concrete beam test samples. Graded aggregate base (GAB) minimum 6" depth. Concrete joints and reinforcement per applicable ACI and ASTM standards. Trail width must be a minimum of 12' wide concrete with 2' side shoulders consisting of gravel or other suitable surface capable of supporting commercial vehicles and equipment.

**GEORGIA POWER**  
**GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR TRAIL**  
**INSTALLATION ON RIGHT-OF-WAY\* (CONTINUED)**

3. Provide all construction drawings and specifications for GPC review and approval, including:
  - a. Site Development (Civil) Drawings
  - b. Erosion, Sedimentation, and Pollution Control Plan
  - c. Project Specifications
  - d. Tree Protection and Replacement Drawings
4. GPC may access and/or close the trail at any time for maintenance and trouble calls with or without prior notice or consent to any individuals, the public, or business entities.
5. Site erosion control in compliance with the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975, as amended.
  - a. Cut and fill slopes graded to a slope of 2.5:1 or flatter, protected from erosion by appropriate erosion control, such as grass sod, seed and mulch, rip-rap, etc.
  - b. Adequate storm water diversions, such as ditches, berms, etc. at the top of all cut or fill slopes to prevent water from running down slopes.
6. Site storm water system design in compliance with all federal, state and local requirements.

These guidelines are for informational purposes only and the information set forth herein is subject to change at any time in
7. Ditch slopes constructed with a centerline slope of 0.5% minimum and stabilized with cover to minimize long-term erosion in accordance with the Manual for Erosion and Sedimentation Control in Georgia (Green Book).
8. Trees, brush, stumps, roots, topsoil, organic materials, asphalt, foundations and other debris to be removed from the site, including cut and fill areas.

9. A suitable site free of any environmental hazards, contaminants or concerns:
  - a. Copies of environmental site assessments, studies or investigations performed on the site and the GPC lease/easement area
  - b. Copies of any environmental permit and regulatory correspondence pertaining to the site or GPC lease/easement area
10. Applicant must obtain all applicable local, state, and federal approvals and/or permits prior to beginning land disturbance activity for development of the trail area. Applicant is responsible for any fees associated with applicable approvals and/or permits.
11. Provide copies of Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Notice of Intent.
12. The site should be prepared for inspection at least 4 weeks in advance of planned commencement of construction. GPC will inspect the site for conformance with its requirements and the encroachment agreement after notice from applicant.
13. Any approved deviations or variances from these requirements will be documented in the encroachment agreement between GPC and applicant.

