CLARKSTON

GREENWAY STUDY



Adopted August 8, 2024

2023 Livable Centers Initiative

CITY OF CLARKSTON

Atlanta Regional Commission

LCI

Perkins&Will

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Opposite, right: Some of the Community Engagement Ambassadors and members of the project team at the Juneteenth Festival.

Funding for this project is provided through the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI), which awards federal grants to foster the development of vibrant, walkable places that offer increased mobility options, encourage healthy lifestyles, and provide improved access to jobs and services.

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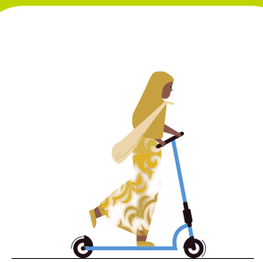
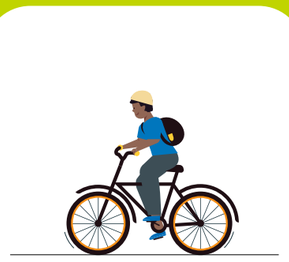
Opposite, right: View of the City of Clarkston facing west toward Atlanta.







CHAPTER 0

Executive Summary

Project Purpose and Site Context
Analysis Summary
Public Engagement Summary
Evaluation and Goal Setting
Proposed Final Trail Route
Implementation Plan

PROJECT PURPOSE & SITE CONTEXT

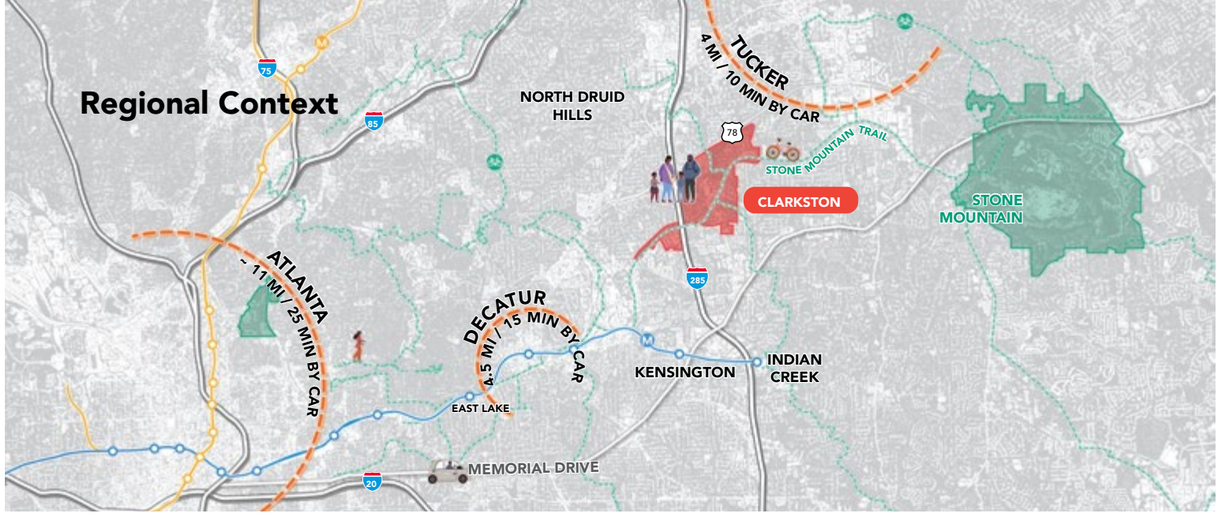
The LCI Program

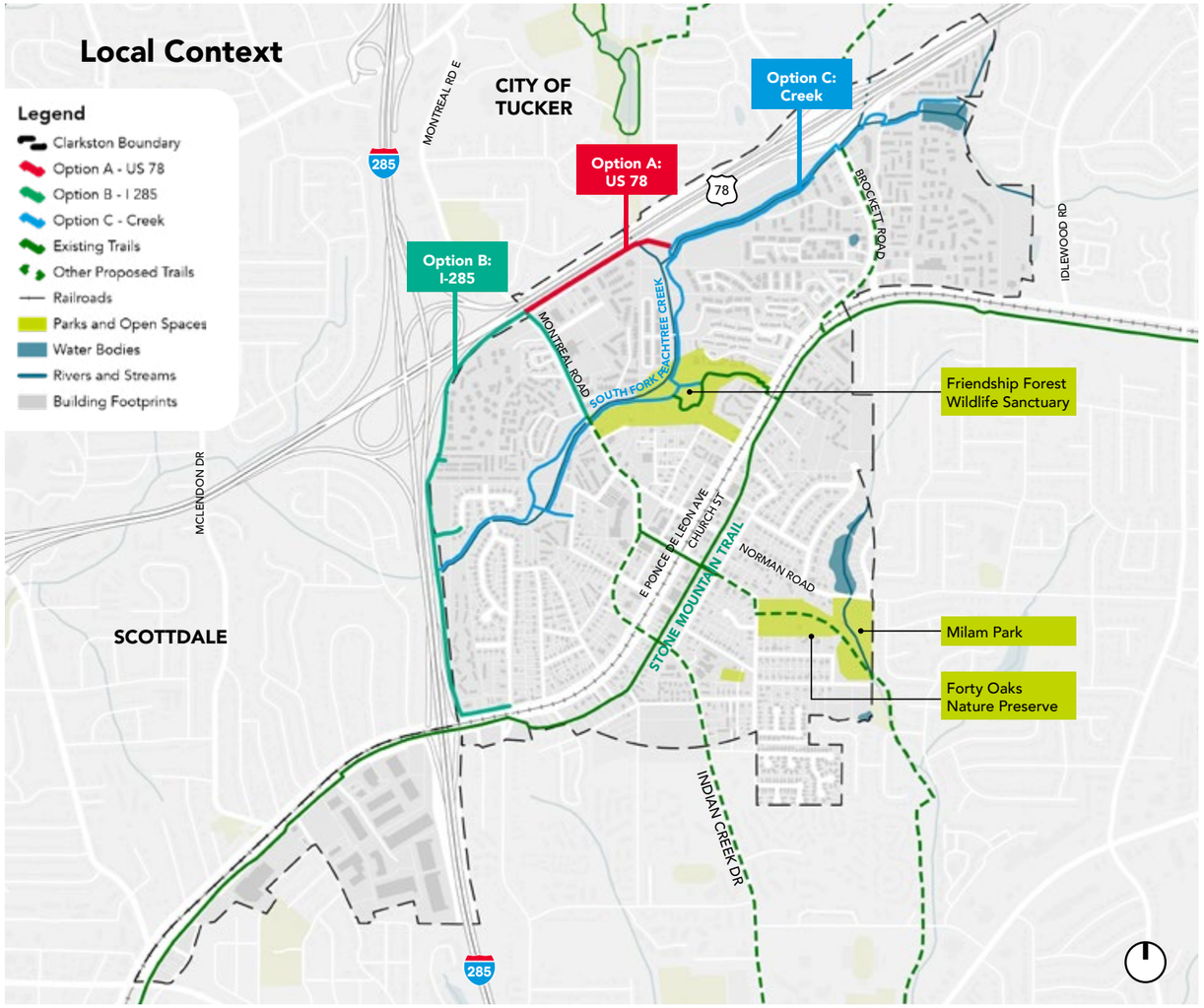
In 2022, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) awarded a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) grant to the City of Clarkston to develop plans for a trail along the Highway 78 corridor, I-285, or the South Fork Peachtree Creek. Created as a way to reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve air quality, the LCI is a grant program that encourages local jurisdictions to re-envision their communities as vibrant, walkable places that offer increased mobility options, encourage healthy lifestyles, and provide improved access to jobs and services. The City of Clarkston was awarded an LCI grant in 2004, and separate LCI awards in 2015 and 2022 to update and expand the plan to incorporate changing local needs. ARC funds 80% of the grants, and the City provides a 20% match.

The Clarkston Greenway Study

The Clarkston Greenway Study has come from many years of planning. The 2015 LCI and City's recent Comprehensive Plan showed a connected trail network and proposed the three route options shown to the right. This study advances those recommendations to determine the most feasible trail routes based on public feedback, social vulnerability and equity, the number of people and destinations reached, site conditions and the natural environment, construction methods, the need for easements or right-of-way acquisition, and more. This study recommends a combination of the options.







ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Considered "the most diverse square mile in the United States," Clarkston is home to people who speak over 60 languages and come from over 40 nationalities, ranging from Nepal and Afghanistan to Somalia and Iraq. The city has a significant amount of rental housing, which has made it an attractive location for refugees and immigrants. The site understanding began with regional and local data analysis to understand demographics, connectivity and walkability across the city, access to parks, existing community landmarks, along with a review of previous planning efforts.

Clarkston is bounded by Highway 78 to the north and I-285 to the west and planned around the Georgia Railroad, now owned by CSX Transportation, that runs through the heart of the city. The railroad tracks are a barrier that divides the city, with opportunities to cross. While the downtown core is walkable, the northwestern and northeastern parts of the city are occupied by large multi-family housing complexes with internal street drives that reduce connectivity in and between these properties and to through-streets.

The most prominent natural resource in Clarkston is the South Fork Peachtree Creek, but it is also inaccessible. The only place residents can safely access the creek is in Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary. Milam Park and the Forty Oaks Nature Reserve are located in the southeast part of the city and offer access to nature, sports courts, and open fields.

Site Conditions

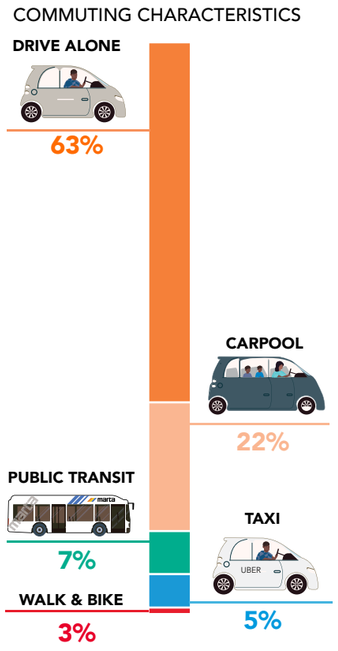
The project team assessed the site conditions through site visits along the proposed trail routes and other alternate parallel paths within the city. Trail options A and B (shown in red and green) were proposed as greenway routes along High 78 and I-285 within GDOT right-of-way, but these routes were found to be challenging to accomplish because of costly retaining walls, GDOT encroachment agreements, and property easements. These routes do make a perimeter connection but the trail experience would be noisy and undesirable to most users. Because of this, the team explored alternative routes along the backs of apartment complexes, which will provide greater access, a greenway experience, and may be more feasible to construct.

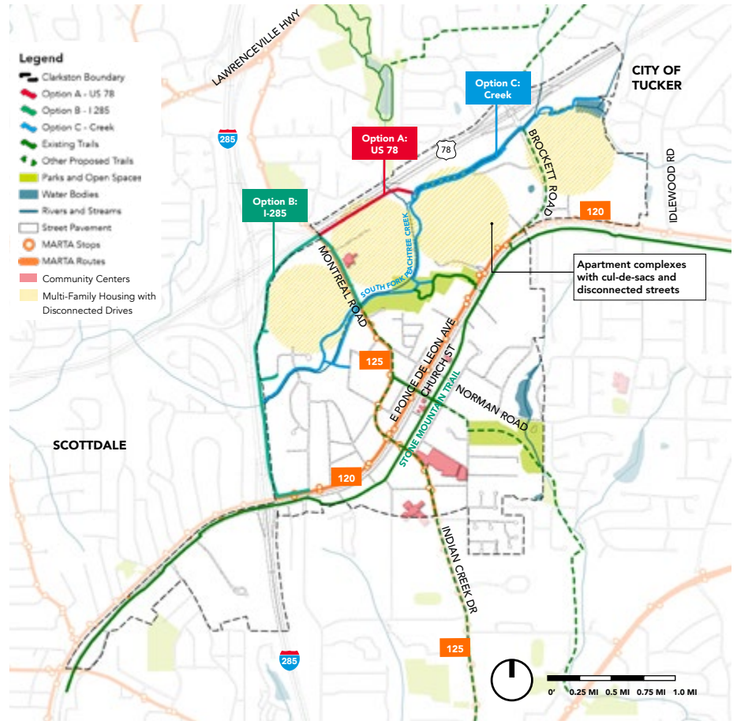
The South Fork Peachtree Creek is a beautiful waterway that flows through the city but there are challenges such as poor access, significant elevation changes, fences, and overgrown vegetation. Option C, along the creek (shown in blue), will require bridges because of space constraints and elevation changes. This route will also require traffic calming and safe crossing zones where it crosses Montreal Road and Brockett Road.

Top, left: Clarkston demographics show that more than 30% use carpool, transit, or walk and bike.

Top, right: The railroad and apartment complexes with internal drives are major barriers to walkability and connectivity.

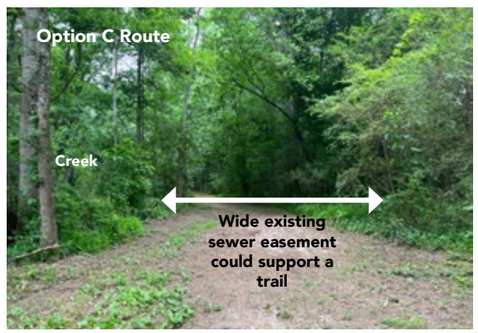
Bottom: Photos showing site conditions along I-285, apartment properties, and the creek.











REGIONAL ANALYSIS & HEALTH INDICATORS

Clarkston is situated near the center of DeKalb County with good interstate and highway access for drivers, but because of its separation from major transit networks, residents must drive most places. The city is only serviced by two MARTA bus routes, which have long headways, and the closest MARTA train station is Kensington, a 15-minute bus ride for residents. The regional analysis looked at Clarkston's relationships with neighboring areas as well as environmental and social justice indices to better understand the demographic conditions. The CDC's Social Vulnerability Index is a measure of how well a community is prepared to respond to crises; it considers many demographic indicators like socioeconomic status, household characteristics, racial and ethnic minority status, and housing type and transportation. Clarkston is 'extremely vulnerable' compared to other places in Georgia—75% to 100% of households in the corresponding Census tracts are vulnerable. Many residents live below the poverty threshold, face mental health distress, have lower access to transit, and live in multi-generational households.

In Clarkston, health has been a recurring theme in community conversations. Mental health has been cited as an important topic, especially for refugees and immigrants. Clarkston, along with a large swath of west and south Atlanta show a high percentage and overlap of frequent mental health distress and physical inactivity. Clarkston is also considered a food desert, which is defined by the USDA as areas with limited access to affordable and healthy food. Within the city, there are many food marts but there is limited availability of fresh produce. Most of the Census tracts in Clarkston are classified as low-income and low-access areas, meaning that the poverty rate is 20% or higher, and more than 33% of residents are more than one mile away from the nearest supermarket or large grocery store. Limited access to fresh food and amenities for physical activity are felt by residents every day, who often travel to neighboring cities to use parks and visit supermarkets.

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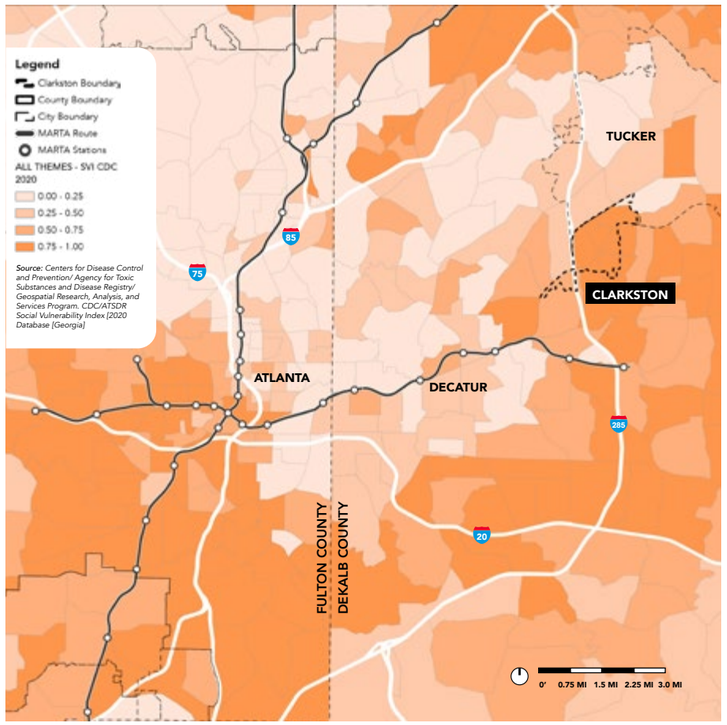
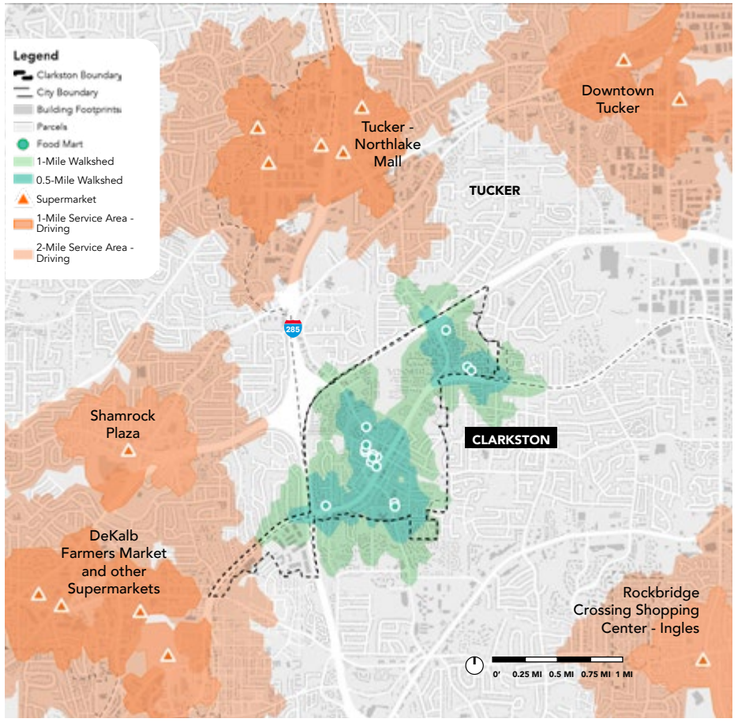
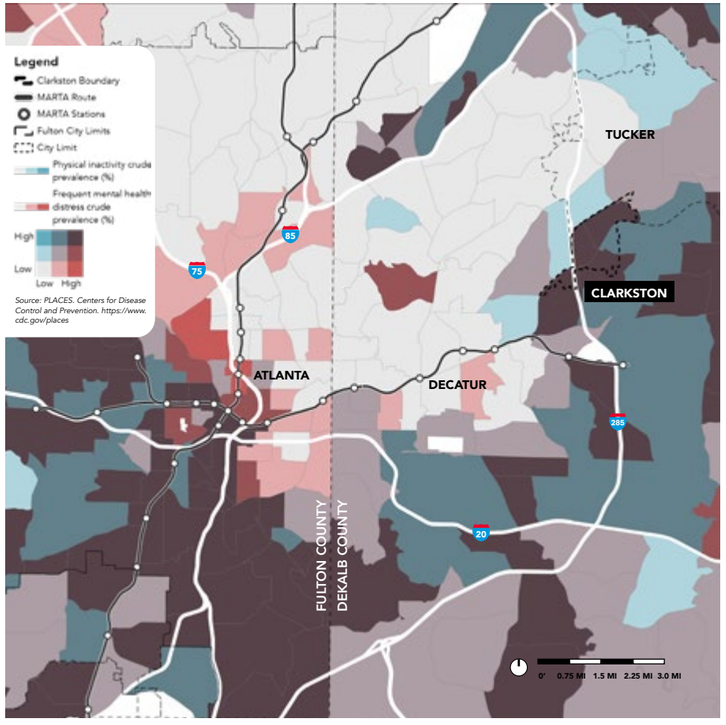


Top: Map showing how Clarkston is "extremely vulnerable" as per the Social Vulnerability Index by the CDC.

Bottom, left: Map showing food marts in Clarkston, and how supermarkets are located more than 1 mile away.

Bottom, right: Clarkston, along with parts of west and south Atlanta show a high percentage of physical inactivity and mental health distress.





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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DRIVES THE PROCESS

The project team aimed to make participation easy, fun, and meaningful for all community members across cultures, languages, and generations. The team began the engagement process by meeting with trusted community leaders identified by the City to learn how residents like to participate and to ask how to make it accessible for everyone. Based on their feedback, the project team established a group of Community Engagement Ambassadors—active community members representing Clarkston's diversity who were compensated to promote the study through their networks—to translate notices and input activities into Clarkston's top languages, and to interpret at public events.

MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

Ambassadors

Compensated community members and organization representatives, most of whom speak multiple languages.

- TRANSLATE MEETING NOTICES
- TRANSLATE INPUT ACTIVITIES
- DISTRIBUTE MEETING NOTICES
- INTERPRET AT PUBLIC EVENTS

Project Advisory Group

A group of volunteer community members who advise on many pieces of the process at key milestones and advocate for the project.

FEEDBACK ON:

- ENGAGEMENT METHODS
- TRAIL ALTERNATIVES & DESIGN

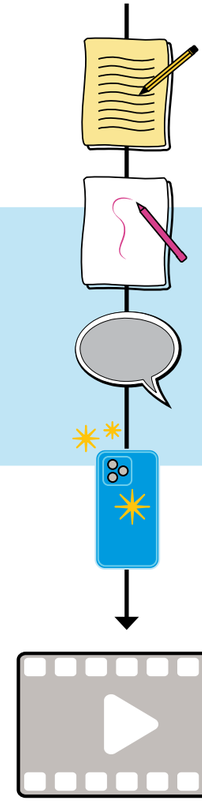
Large Public Events

Existing community events where the project team coordinated with organizations to host a booth or separate pop-up event.

- **Pop-up at Early Learning Fair with CDF Action**
  June 3, 2023
- **Clarkston Tell Me A Story! with CDF Action**
  August 19, 2023
- **Race Around the World 5K with Refuge Coffee**
  September 23, 2023
- **Three Pop-ups Throughout the Community**
  February 24 & 25, 2024
- **Clarkston Juneteenth Festival**
  June 15, 2024

"Walk With Us" Storytelling

Ongoing opportunity for residents to film, write, photograph, or draw their experiences and how a greenway would benefit them.



Watch the video here!

ALL CLARKSTON RESIDENTS

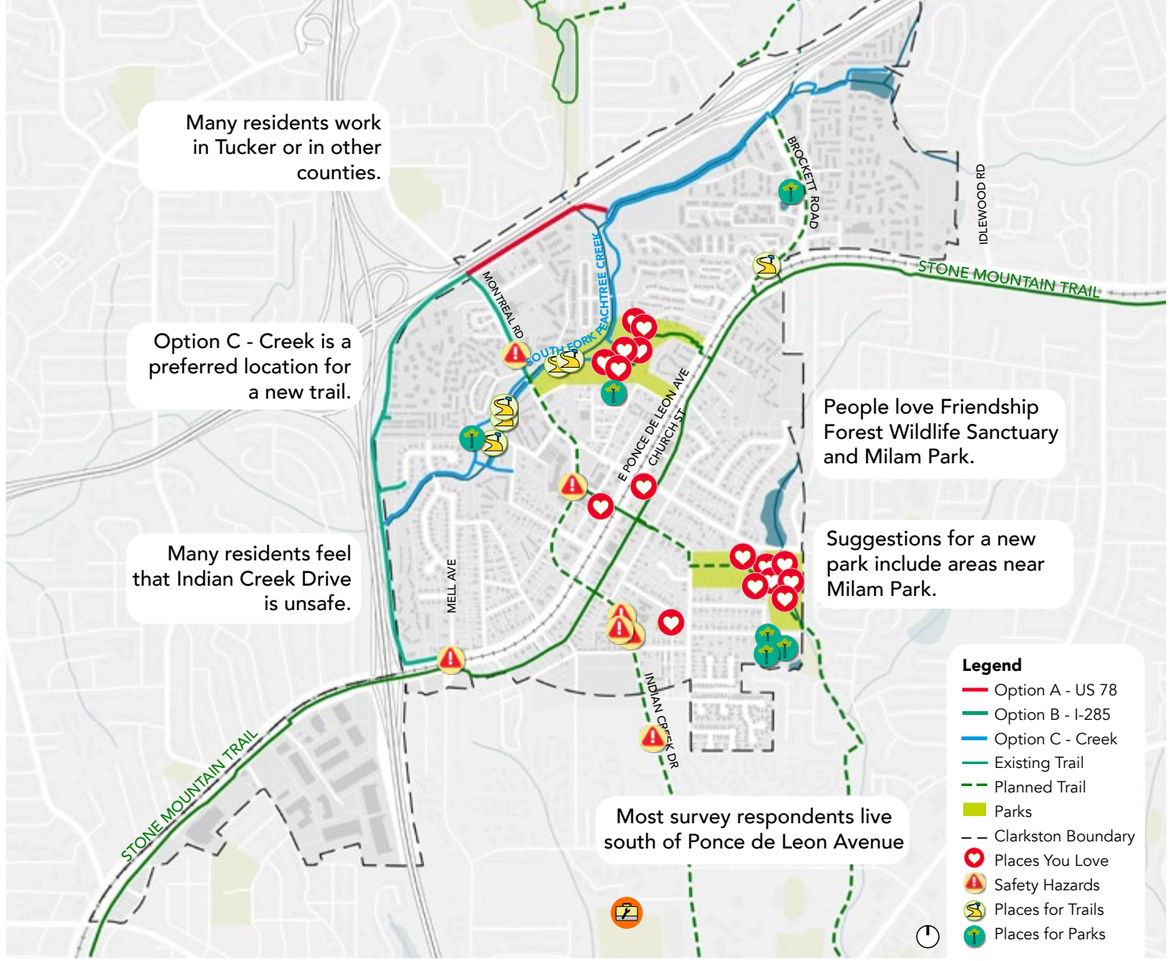




PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Many outreach and engagement methods were used to determine the community's goals and aspirations for the greenway, map existing travel patterns, and collect feedback on the trail route and residents' suggestions for amenities. Ongoing relationships with local organizations also helped to co-locate public meetings at existing, popular community events. This enabled the project to reach more residents as people found familiar faces and were willing to share feedback in languages comfortable to them. All engagement materials also used a custom, graphic-focused communication system to overcome language barriers and to ensure people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities felt represented. Through social media posts, signage, hard copy flyers, email campaigns, and the efforts of Community Engagement Ambassadors, the project received over 150 comments and 80 survey responses.

Throughout the project, videography and photography were used to document all public events. Video interviews were conducted with longtime residents, youth leaders, and the Engagement Ambassadors. Interviews with the Mayor, community members, and Ambassadors were released on the website throughout the project. The final 'Walk With Us' video was compiled at the end of the project to showcase the diversity of Clarkston, the community's commitment to the greenway trail, and how residents informed the greenway that they will love and use every day.



Top, middle: Map showing votes for places people love in Clarkston, where parks and trails should be, and safety concerns.

Opposite: Photos from the Refuge Coffee Race Around the World 5K pop-up event.

"Option C could link several apartment clusters where hundreds of people live, providing access to nature within minutes."

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"Friendship Forest is an excellent public space. Placing a cycling / pedestrian path through would enable easier access and a peaceful commute for residents cycling to work or errands."



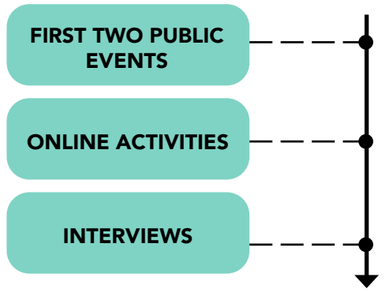


Photo courtesy Refuge Coffee, Olivia Bowdoin, 2023

EVALUATION & GOAL SETTING

1. Community Goal Setting

Community feedback provided an understanding of residents' priorities.



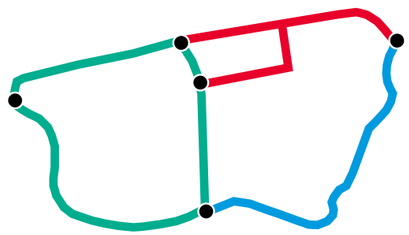
2. Establish Goals & Metrics

Create goal categories with health as an overarching theme throughout all goals.



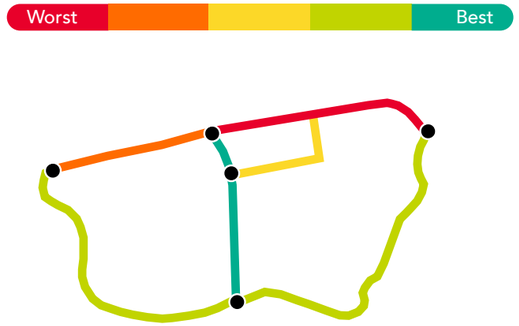
3. Determine Trail Segments

Divide each trail option (Options A, B, and C) into segments based on where they intersect streets or each other. Determine if alternatives were possible for some of the segments.



4. Score Each Segment

Use a scale of 0 (worst) to 5 (best) to score each metric for each trail segment and sum the total for each segment. GIS analysis and site walks provided the basis for the scores.



5. Develop Preliminary Route

Develop the preliminary route based off the highest scores to create a fully connected trail route, linking people and key destinations.



6. Re-score Using Feedback

Re-score each segment using public feedback and additional site walks.



7. Determine Final Route

Final Project Goals

- **Connectivity:** Trails should provide connections throughout Clarkston, giving the opportunity for an active commute to work, home, daily needs, and important civic institutions, while also connecting into networks that broaden residents' access to other places in the Atlanta region.
- **Parks and Nature:** Trails provide access to natural resources and existing and new parks, ensuring a high-quality, comfortable, healthy, and safe experience.
- **Equity and Resilience:** New trails should be accessible to all Clarkston residents and should be designed to facilitate equitable access to nature and destinations while promoting public health and environmental resilience.
- **Cost and Feasibility:** The construction of new trails should consider community preferences, future operations and maintenance based on City capacity, cost, and the need for land acquisition.

PROPOSED FINAL TRAIL ROUTE

Route Summary

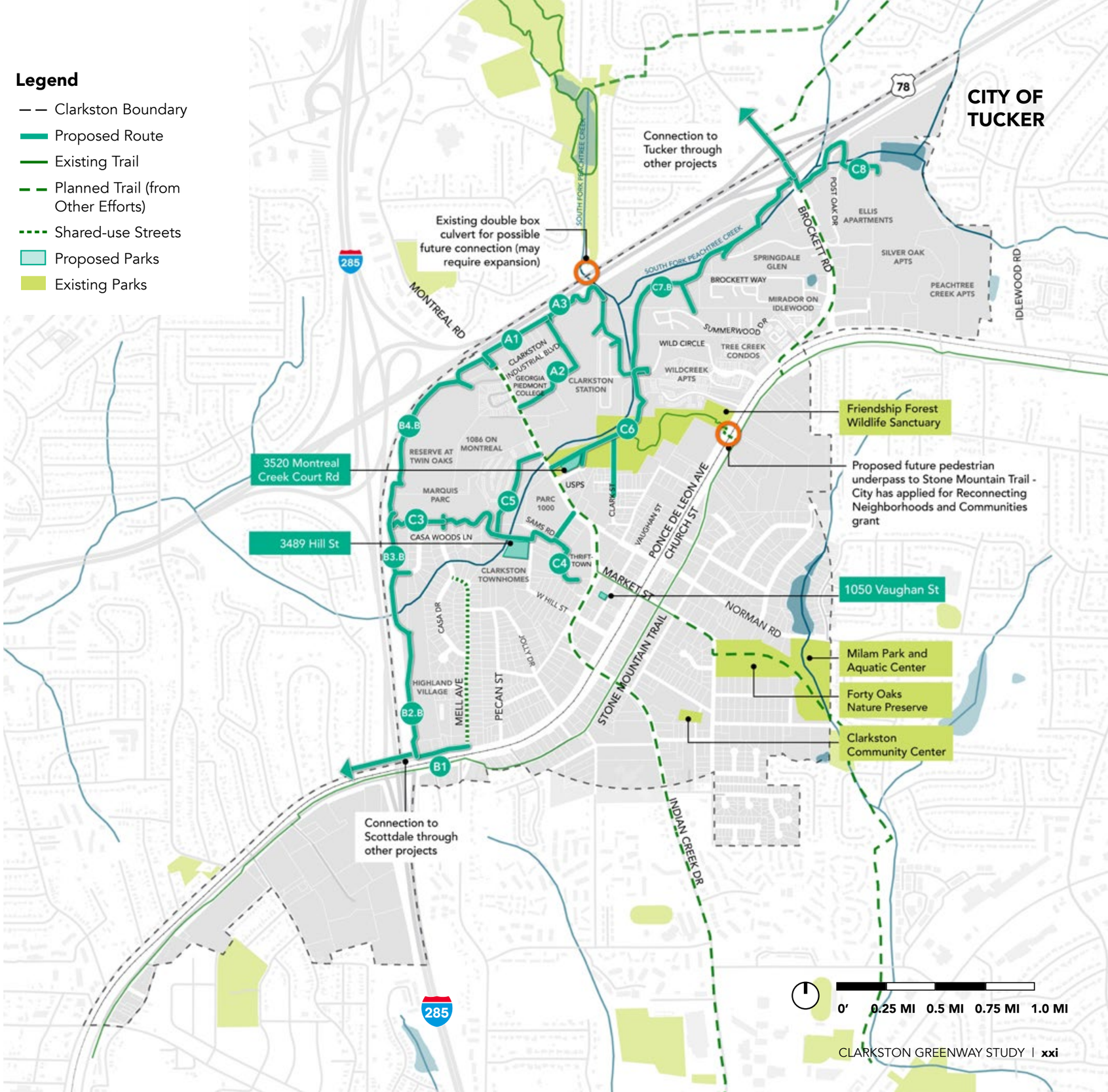
The proposed final trail route is a result of public feedback from the pop-ups and online activities in February and March 2024, additional site visits to verify site conditions and topography, and conversations with the Project Advisory Group and City Councilmembers. The entire length of the trail shown in green is 5.8 miles, and it will be constructed in phases as described in Chapter 5.

Community and Regional Connections

This route offers multiple trail spur connections to most apartment complexes in this part of the city and safe crossings on major corridors, like E. Ponce de Leon Avenue, Brockett Road, and Montreal Road. Safe crossings will include crosswalks and pedestrian-activated devices such as RRFB or HAWK signals. Regional connections are also considered to the Stone Mountain Trail, Scottdale, and Tucker. The City of Tucker has trail projects and it is imagined that the Clarkston Greenway would connect to these initiatives on Brockett Road through the Highway 78 underpass. The City of Clarkston will re-apply for a federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant in Fall 2024 to construct a crossing under the railroad tracks across from Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, connecting the greenway to the Stone Mountain Trail.

Montreal Road / N. Indian Creek Drive

This study originally included a route along Montreal Road from Highway 78 south to the South Fork Peachtree Creek. However, the City of Clarkston was awarded a large planning grant from the federal Safe Streets for All program (SS4A) that is designing a road diet for Montreal Road and N. Indian Creek Drive to reduce travel lanes or lane widths and improve safety. Because of this, that segment was removed, but recommendations are provided for how that study could design Montreal Road. The Clarkston Greenway will link to this future streetscape and pedestrian enhancement project.



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PROPOSED FINAL TRAIL ROUTE

This view shows the Clarkston Greenway running along the South Fork Peachtree Creek, behind the Plantation Condominiums. The trail joins at Montreal Road and continues along the creek toward Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary. The greenway will include environmental clean-up to make the creek more accessible and will have a mix of paved paths and boardwalks.



Montreal Road

Plantation Condominiums

Clarkston Greenway

South Fork Peachtree Creek

TRAIL DESIGN AND FURNITURE

The Clarkston Greenway will have multiple design conditions throughout the proposed route because it will run on-street, within potential easements in apartment properties, within the DeKalb County sewer easement along the South Fork Peachtree Creek, along the creek in other locations, and behind private properties. The trail will usually be between 10 feet and 14 feet wide and include landscape improvements and environmental clean-up in places where it is needed, like along the creek and in floodplains.

Trail amenities along the Clarkston Greenway will improve the safety and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists, and it will increase the cleanliness of the trail. Trail furniture includes all the benches, bike racks, trash cans, lighting, and various safety elements along the trails, at pocket parks, and near apartment communities. The Clarkston Greenway is also recommended to be open all times of day. Pedestrian lights that are on from dusk until 11:00 PM will offer residents a safe walking and biking path in the evenings for commuting and recreation.

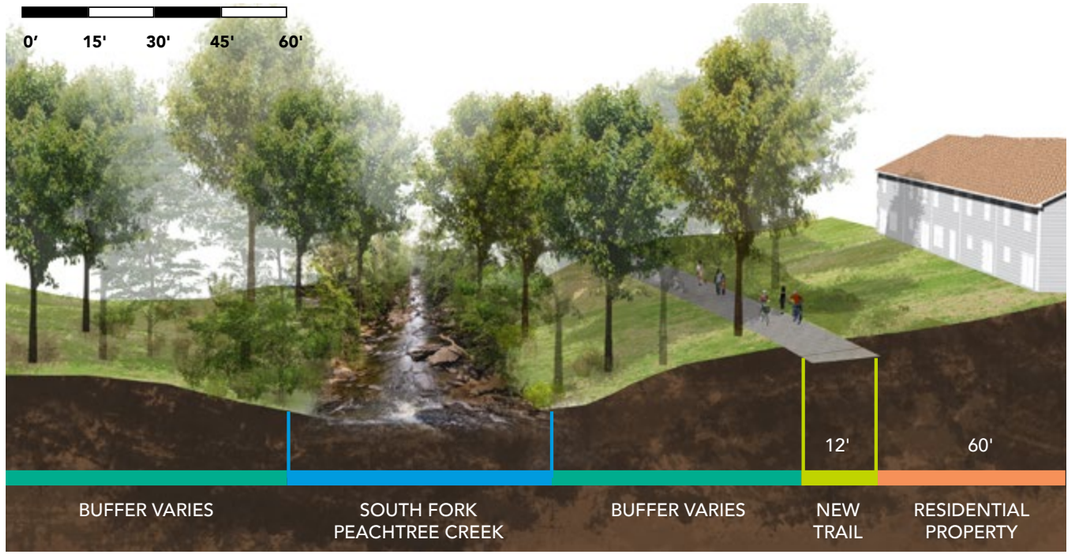
Public art, pocket parks, wayfinding, and signage will be key components of the trail to enhance the greenway experience, offer opportunities for play, and to help pedestrians understand where they are in the city. The City can consider collaborating with organizations and local artists to design murals or begin a public art initiative, and conduct a wayfinding study. Opportunities for pocket parks are identified on properties near Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, the South Fork Peachtree Creek, and on Vaughan Street.

AFFORDABILITY AND EQUITY RECOMMENDATIONS

During the goal setting exercise, "ensure residents can afford to live in Clarkston" and "build trails that reach people without cars" received some of the highest votes. Equity and affordability were embedded into the evaluation for the trail segments. The City of Clarkston will need to consider policies that protect legacy homeowners, renters in existing apartment complexes, and local businesses as the trail is constructed. Some recommendations include (more in Chapter 4):

- Conduct a housing study that builds on upcoming studies and housing policies set in the 2040 Clarkston Comprehensive Plan.
- Use Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to acquire, rehabilitate, or construct new affordable housing.
- Consider inclusionary zoning provisions for affordable housing.
- Consider creating an anti-displacement fund and work with organizations to make renters aware of their rights.

S.4 Trail Section Near the Creek and Residential Properties





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

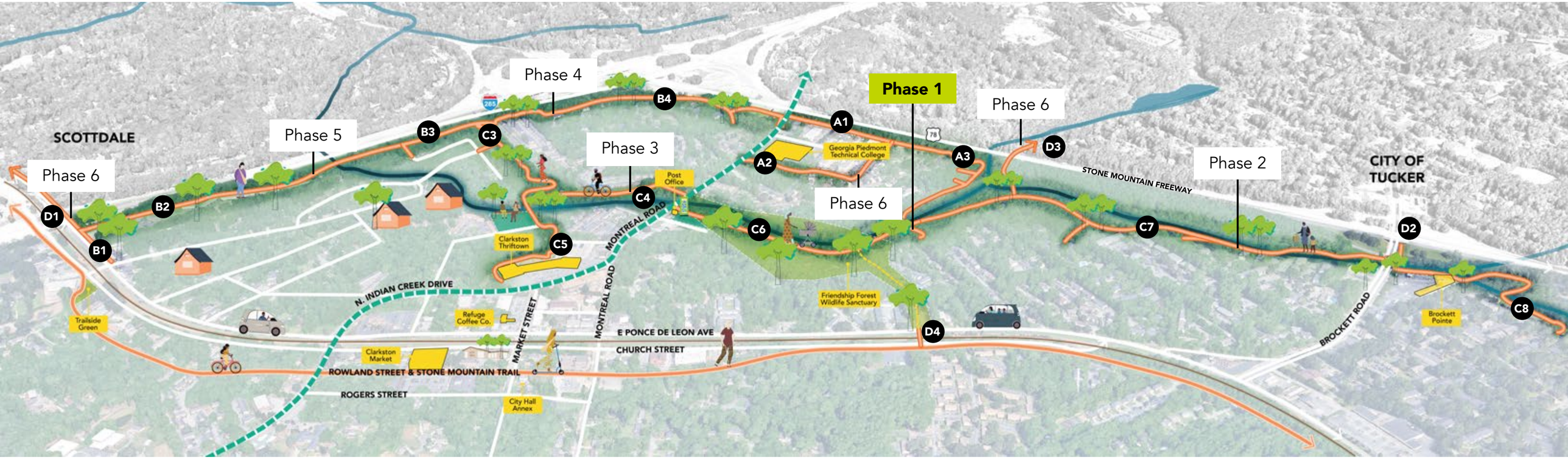
The proposed trail route is divided into six phases for implementation, all of which range from 0.7 mile to 1.35 mile in length. Each phase will connect to a previous phase and / or an existing street, trail, or destination. Phase 1 will run from Montreal Road through Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary to Wild Circle Road and connects to apartments along the way. Phase 2 will begin at Wild Circle Road and connect the northeast parts of the city, by running along the creek to Brockett Road. Phase 3 will create a loop to connect residents in the west side of the city to Downtown Clarkston and Thriftown. Phases 4 and 5 will run along potential easements in apartment communities and offer an alternate routes for residents to reach Montreal Road. Phase 6 looks at future greenway expansions for more local and regional connections.

The methodology for the cost estimate was based on multiple site visits to check topographic conditions, baseline costs for the construction of the trail, and cost for other trail features like lighting, fencing, benches, bridges, and safety measures etc. The cost includes engineering, furniture, construction, land acquisition, and contingency in 2024 dollars. The City of Clarkston has already allocated money from the SPLOST II Program to fund surveying, engineering, and right-of-way acquisition for Phase 1 and has also applied for Congressional District Spending to fund engineering for Phases 2 and 3.

GREENWAY PHASING

Phase	Segment	Cost
Phase 1	C6	$3,124,000
Phase 2	C7 and C8	$7,150,000
Phase 3	C4 and C5	$5,145,000
Phase 4	C3, B3, & B4	$6,067,000
Phase 5	B1 and B2	$3,440,000
Phase 6	A1, A2, A3 D1, D2, D3, D4	A1, A2, A3: $6,620,000 D1 to D4: Cost not determined

Phases 1-5: $25,000,000 to $30,000,000



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100-DAY ACTION PLAN

Immediate Implementation for Phases 1 to 3

The 100-Day Action Plan focuses on the steps to enable Phases 1 to 3. The City of Clarkston has already allocated funding for surveying, engineering, and ROW acquisition for Phase 1 in the DeKalb County SPLOST II and has started to find funding for the surveying and engineering tasks in Phases 2 and 3. However, there are other items within those phases that will require advance coordination, like easement agreements or ROW acquisition, starting partnerships with non-profits, and applying for grants that have deadlines in the next three to 12 months.

Concurrent with the actions listed to the right, the City of Clarkston will be working on the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) planning project on Montreal Road and N. Indian Creek Drive. This will require coordination between the planning and engineering teams because Phase 1 connects to Montreal Road next to the South Fork Peachtree Creek. It will be key to coordinate the HAWK signal placement, signage, streetscape improvements, and how the trail will interact and connect with the streetscape changes. On-going community engagement and communication, particularly with affected property owners, as the phases are implemented will be important to the success of building the Clarkston Greenway. Property owners should be kept informed of progress and should collaborate with the planning and engineering teams so that impacts on their properties are addressed.

T.1: Enabling Phase 1

Task	Description
Release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for surveying and engineering for Phase 1	Determine timeline. Release the RFP in Fall 2024 and hire a firm to conduct the detailed engineering, to start in early 2025.
Start coordination with property owners.	Contact affected property owners along the Phase 1 route for easements or trail connections to apartment communities.
Review funding plan and determine which grants to pursue for construction funding in 2025.	Apply for grants and partner with a non-profit when needed.

T.2: Enabling Phases 2 and 3

Task	Description
Start coordination with property owners.	Contact affected property owners along the Phases 2 and 3 routes for easements or trail connections to apartment communities.
Apply for grants to fund engineering or implementation.	If not awarded Congressional District Funding, determine which grants the City should apply for and start the actions needed to apply.
Review funding plan and determine which grants to pursue.	Apply for grants and partner with a non-profit when needed.

Immediate Actions for Ongoing and Long-Term Efforts

Ongoing and long-term initiatives will support the implementation of the Clarkston Greenway over the implementation process, but some steps can be taken immediately to ensure momentum, resident quality of life, and the future success of the greenway.

Building Pocket Parks
A few pocket parks are proposed along the greenway at 1050 Vaughan Street (owned by the City), 3489 Hill Street, and 3520 Montreal Circle Court Road (owned by the City). The first step the City could take is to determine if it is strategic to purchase the 3489 Hill Street property now. If funds are available, they could purchase immediately. If funding is not available, the City could potentially apply for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship program or the Georgia Outdoor Recreational grant to help acquire the land and start the design process.

The City could also start the planning and design process for the other two properties by releasing an RFP, or by working with Park Pride or another parks-oriented agency.

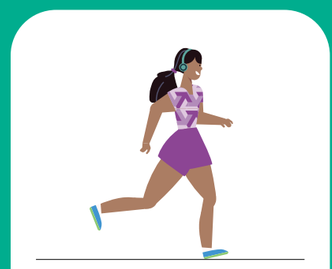
Explore Housing Tools and Strategies
The City of Clarkston could explore housing tools such as a housing trust fund, a land trust, or collaboration with a land bank by initiating a housing study (project A.2) specific to addressing the need and challenges in Clarkston.

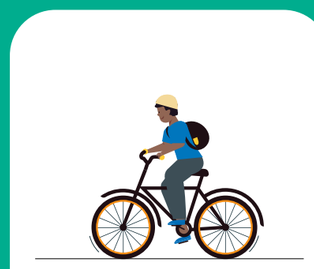
Establish a Partnership with a Non-profit
Many of the grants in the funding plan require partnership with a non-profit entity. The City could explore a "Friends of" group specifically for the greenway that could work with Park Pride to help with grant application eligibility.

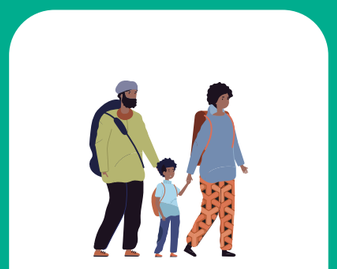
Apply for Applicable Grants Due in 2024-2025
Some grants in the funding plan have deadlines by the end of 2024. If the City feels prepared to apply for grants in 2024, the following list should be highest priority:

- Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grants Program (administered by the EPA).
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources).
- Our Town grant (administered by the National Endowment for the Arts).
- Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant to study the connection to the Stone Mountain Trail under the railroad tracks, across from Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary.

If not ready in 2024 to apply for these grants, the City grants administrator should identify and prepare for grants due in 2025. Some have annual awards and could be prioritized.







CHAPTER 1

Analysis

Project Purpose
Context
Analysis Maps - Physical Conditions
Analysis Maps - Demographics
Previous Plan Review

PROJECT PURPOSE

The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Program

The LCI program was started in 2000 as a way to reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve air quality through creating walkable communities. It does this by encouraging increased mobility options, healthy lifestyles, and improved access to jobs and services. The program goals are to encourage a diversity of land uses accessible by all people, provide access to a range of travel modes and increase connectivity, foster public-private partnerships and community support through engagement, and encourage mixed-income and mixed-use neighborhoods. LCI studies make municipalities eligible for federal transportation dollars for implementation projects in the studies, and since 2000, the program has seen more than $312 million invested throughout the region.

In 2022, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) awarded a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) grant to the City of Clarkston to develop plans for a trail along the Highway 78 corridor, I-285, or the South Fork Peachtree Creek. The City of Clarkston was awarded an initial LCI grant in 2004, then subsequent, separate LCI grant awards in 2015 and 2022 to update and expand the plan to incorporate changing local needs and market conditions, with ARC funding 80% of the grant and the City providing a 20% match.

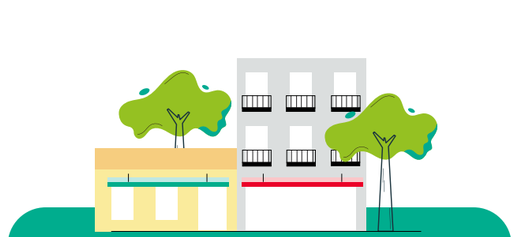
The Clarkston Greenway Study

The Clarkston Greenway Study has come from many years of planning, as described later in the chapter. The 2015 LCI and City's recent Comprehensive Plan showed a connected trail network and proposed the routes evaluated in this study. This study takes those recommendations a step further to determine the best and most feasible trail routes for construction. This study evaluates trail options based on public feedback, social vulnerability and equity, the number of people and destinations reached, site conditions and the natural environment, construction methods, the need for easements or right-of-way acquisition, and more.

Though the routes on the map on page 7 are shown as "options," this study resulted in a combination of segments from all three options. The study also recommends conceptual secondary local and regional connections to the broader network. Recommendations for the greenway include trail placement; typical sections and recommended construction methods; and, conceptual cost estimates for engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction.

Chapter 1 | Analysis

Trail options were evaluated on goals that addressed:



Number of people and places reached



Public feedback



Social vulnerability and equity



Site conditions and natural environment

Construction methods

Need for land or right-of-way acquisitions / easements

GREENWAY PROJECT GOALS

From Preliminary to Final Goals

Six preliminary goals with secondary objectives were offered as a starting point to describe the purpose of a greenway trail in Clarkston, and the community voted on each goal and associated objectives, which allowed the project team to combine some goals and make physical and mental health an overarching theme. Original goals included ensuring affordability and equity, providing opportunities to improve physical and mental health, making sure the trail connected people to places they need to go, providing access to nature and the environment, incorporating parks and green space along the trail, and considering cost and feasibility. The final goals below were used, along with public feedback, to evaluate individual trail segments through quantifiable metrics that are in the categories bulleted below (see Chapter 3).



Physical & Mental Health

Provide access to healthy food, the ability to use active transportation to run errands and commute, and participate in community recreation programs. These are embedded in all the other goals.

01 Connectivity



Trails should provide connections throughout Clarkston, giving the opportunity to commute to work, home, daily needs, and important civic institutions, while also connecting other places in the Atlanta Region. This involves:

- Active commute
- Regional connectivity
- Pedestrian safety

02 Parks & Nature



Trails provide access to natural resources and existing and new parks, ensuring a high-quality, comfortable, healthy, and safe experience, through:

- Access to parks and natural resources
- Comfort and safety
- A high-quality experience

03 Equity & Resilience



New trails should be accessible to all Clarkston residents and should be designed to facilitate equitable access to nature and destinations while promoting public health and environmental resilience. Metrics included:

- Affordability
- Health
- Environment

04 Cost & Feasibility



The construction of new trails should consider community preferences, future operations and maintenance based on City capacity, cost, and the need for land acquisition. Metrics evaluated:

- Property owner coordination
- Cost and funding
- Community preference

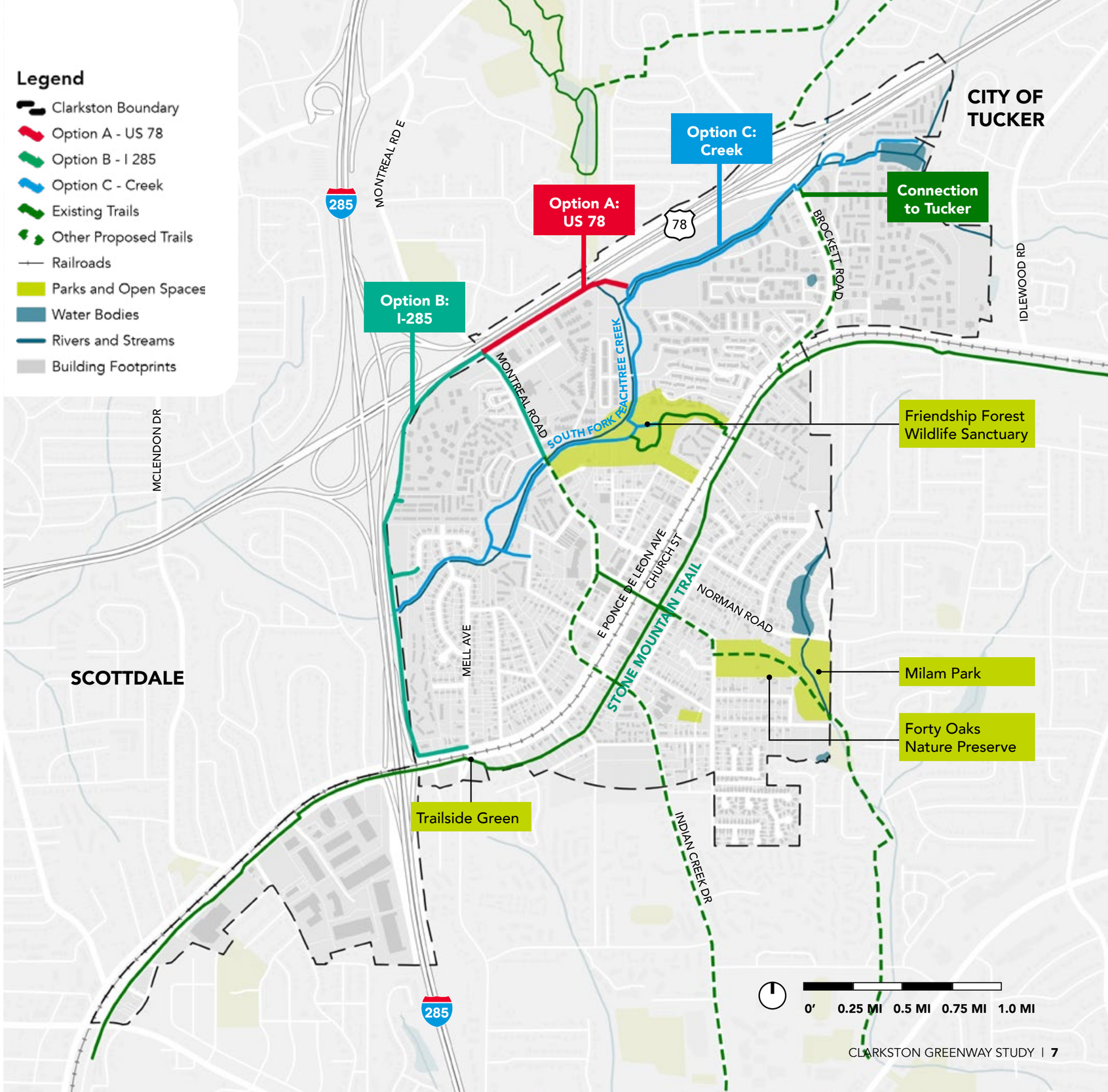
LOCAL CONTEXT

Greenway Study Area

This greenway feasibility study covers the entire city limits of Clarkston; however, the three trail segment options are all on the northern edge of the city, north of Ponce de Leon Avenue. Option A, shown in red, runs along Highway 78 from Montreal Road to the South Fork Peachtree Creek. Option B runs along Montreal Road from the South Fork Peachtree Creek north to properties along Highway 78 and then heads west to follow I-285 south to Ponce de Leon Avenue. This route also shows potential connections into adjacent properties, like apartment complexes. Finally, Option C follows the South Fork Peachtree Creek from I-285 northeast to the Tucker city limits. This route is shown on both sides of the creek to represent multiple options and also has segments that connect into adjacent properties, like Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, single-family neighborhoods, and apartment complexes. This route could connect into the City of Tucker's proposed trail network along Brockett Road (shown in a dark green dashed line). Each of the trail options have constraints with access from adjacent properties or streets, elevation changes, noise, and ease of construction.

The "most diverse square mile in America"

Clarkston is seen as unique in Georgia and the United States because of its diversity, but there a long history of ingenuity and inclusivity. In the past, Clarkston became one of the south's first suburban communities because of the Georgia Railway & Power's streetcar on the Stone Mountain Interurban Rail Line making the commute to Atlanta easier (the history is now commemorated at Trailside Green, one of the City's recently constructed pocket parks). The Womans Club was the first in DeKalb County to be owned by a woman's group in the early 1900s, and Milam Park became DeKalb County's first public park and playground in 1927 because of efforts led by residents (www.clarkstonga.com). In more recent years, Clarkston has welcomed refugees and immigrants from all around the world; improvements to parks, trails, and streetscapes have made it easier to move around the city; and a community of tiny houses has attracted national attention for a creative affordable housing solution.

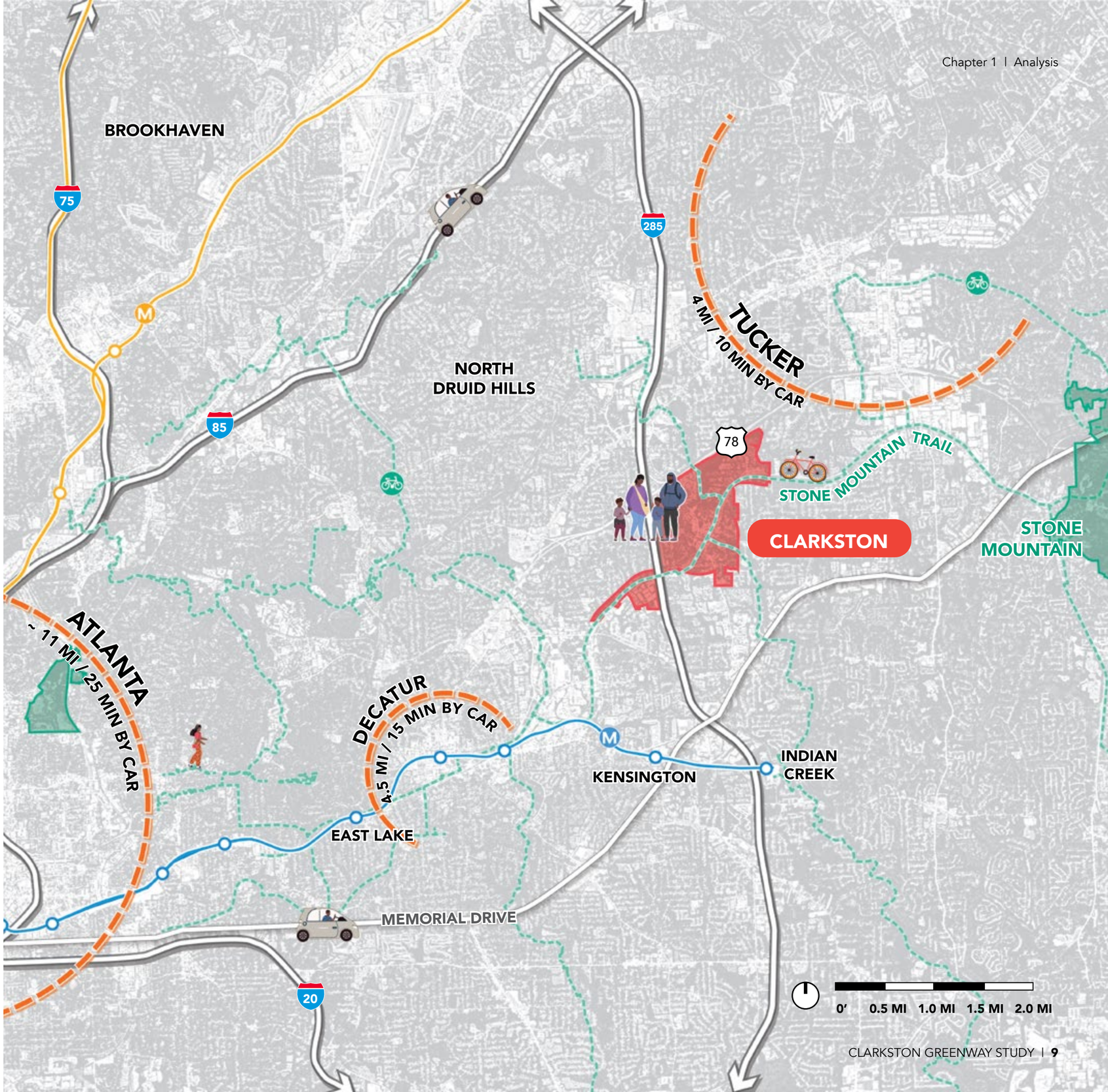


REGIONAL CONTEXT

Connecting Clarkston to Other Destinations

From a broader, regional perspective, Clarkston's existing and future trail network can connect residents to places in other cities, like jobs, recreation, services, retail, and family and friends. Clarkston is situated near the center of DeKalb County with good interstate and highway access for drivers, but because of its separation from major transit networks, residents must drive most places. There is great opportunity to expand the trail and greenway network within the city to both connect residents to places in Clarkston, and to the regional trail networks (built and planned). Clarkston currently has easy access east to Stone Mountain, and west to Avondale and Decatur via the 18.4-mile Stone Mountain PATH Trail. Experienced cyclists could also reach downtown Atlanta on this trail, but it is a long ride and requires shifting to cycling on-street in some places. To reach Tucker, residents must drive, walk along auto-oriented streets, or take multiple MARTA buses. Commuting to Atlanta is also more challenging, requiring driving, traveling to MARTA transit stations, or taking a long MARTA ride via bus and rail.

Many municipalities and the PATH Foundation made plans to expand trail and greenway networks. Clarkston's central location between many of these cities and Stone Mountain Park offers great opportunity for trail network expansion for commuting, running errands, and recreation. Clarkston could also benefit economically from becoming a key connection point and destination from the Stone Mountain PATH Trail through placemaking, additional safe trail connections, and wayfinding.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

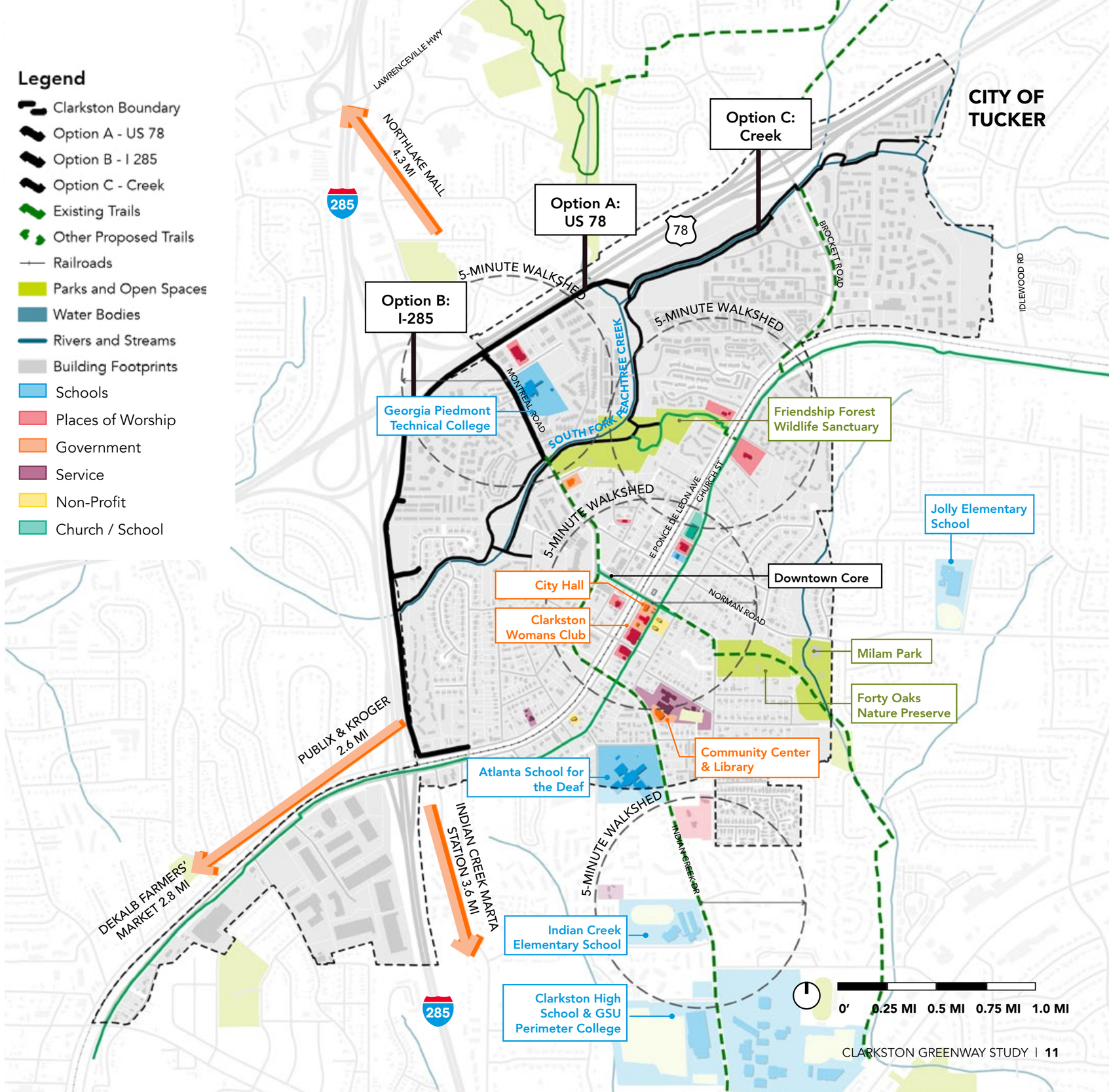
Community resources refer to institutions that serve members of the community through information and services. These are assets that help residents come together during various occasions and seek help during times of crisis. Community resources typically include parks, religious institutions, civic institutions like a city hall or library, non-profit organizations, schools, and service organizations.

In Clarkston, community resources, primarily civic institutions and places of worship are concentrated along Ponce de Leon Avenue and Church Street, the east-west spines of the city. The three large parks in the city—Milam Park, Forty Oaks Nature Preserve, and Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary—are spread out in the northern and southern halves of the city, serving most residents within a 10-minute walk. Schools like the Indian Creek Elementary School, Jolly Elementary School, and the Clarkston High School are located outside of the city boundaries and are serviced by MARTA bus lines.

There are a large number of non-profit organizations in Clarkston, serving refugees and immigrants through advocacy, housing, cultural, and social service programs. These places anchor the city and have become hubs for residents.

How does this inform greenway design?

The proposed trail options will increase pedestrian and bike access from the northern segments of the city into the downtown core, giving residents the choice of using various mobility modes. They also connect to the Stone Mountain Trail and other proposed trails that improve access to Milam Park and the Clarkston Community Center and community garden via the sidewalk network.

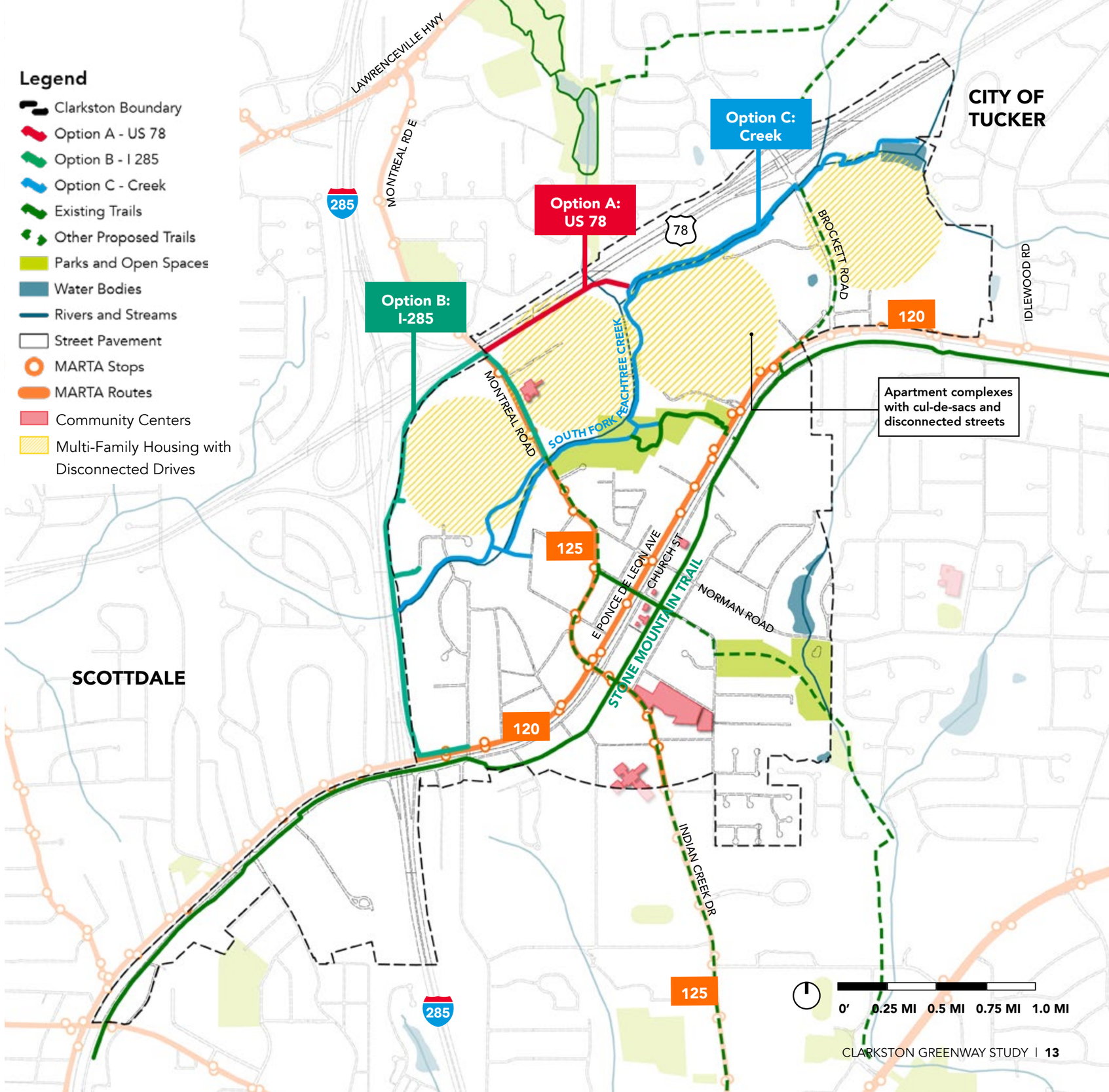


CONNECTIVITY & WALKABILITY

Clarkston is bounded by Highway 78 and I-285 and planned around the Georgia Railroad, now owned by CSX Transportation, that runs through the heart of the city. The city's main streets, Ponce de Leon Avenue and Church Street, run parallel to the railroad tracks and are home to important civic and community landmarks. Montreal Road acts as the north-south spine, connecting to Tucker and Indian Creek Drive respectively. Public transit in the city is operated by MARTA, which services two bus routes, 120 and 125, along the two major axes of Montreal Road / Indian Creek Drive and Ponce de Leon Avenue.

Walkscore.com was used to generate the "walk score" for Clarkston—the city receives a score of 69, indicating that it is "somewhat walkable" and some errands can be completed on foot. This is primarily evident in the downtown core around Market Street, which is planned around a walkable street grid with well-maintained and connected sidewalks. Beyond these eight blocks, the city exhibits a suburban street network with many cul-de-sacs. The northwestern and northeastern parts of the city are occupied by large multi-family housing complexes with internal street drives that reduce connectivity in and between these properties and to through-streets.

The railroad tracks are a barrier that divides the city, and there are few opportunities to cross. Current crossings in the city limits from west to east are at Glendale Road, Mell Avenue, N. Indian Creek Drive, Market Street, Church Street near Erskine Road, and Country Address. All of these are at-grade crossings, except for N. Indian Creek Drive, which goes under the tracks. In 2015, the Stone Mountain Trail was completed in Clarkston. The trail runs parallel to the railroad tracks and connects downtown Atlanta to Stone Mountain Park. This launched a series of planned and completed pedestrian path projects around the city that will bridge both sides of the railroad line and connect residents to destinations.



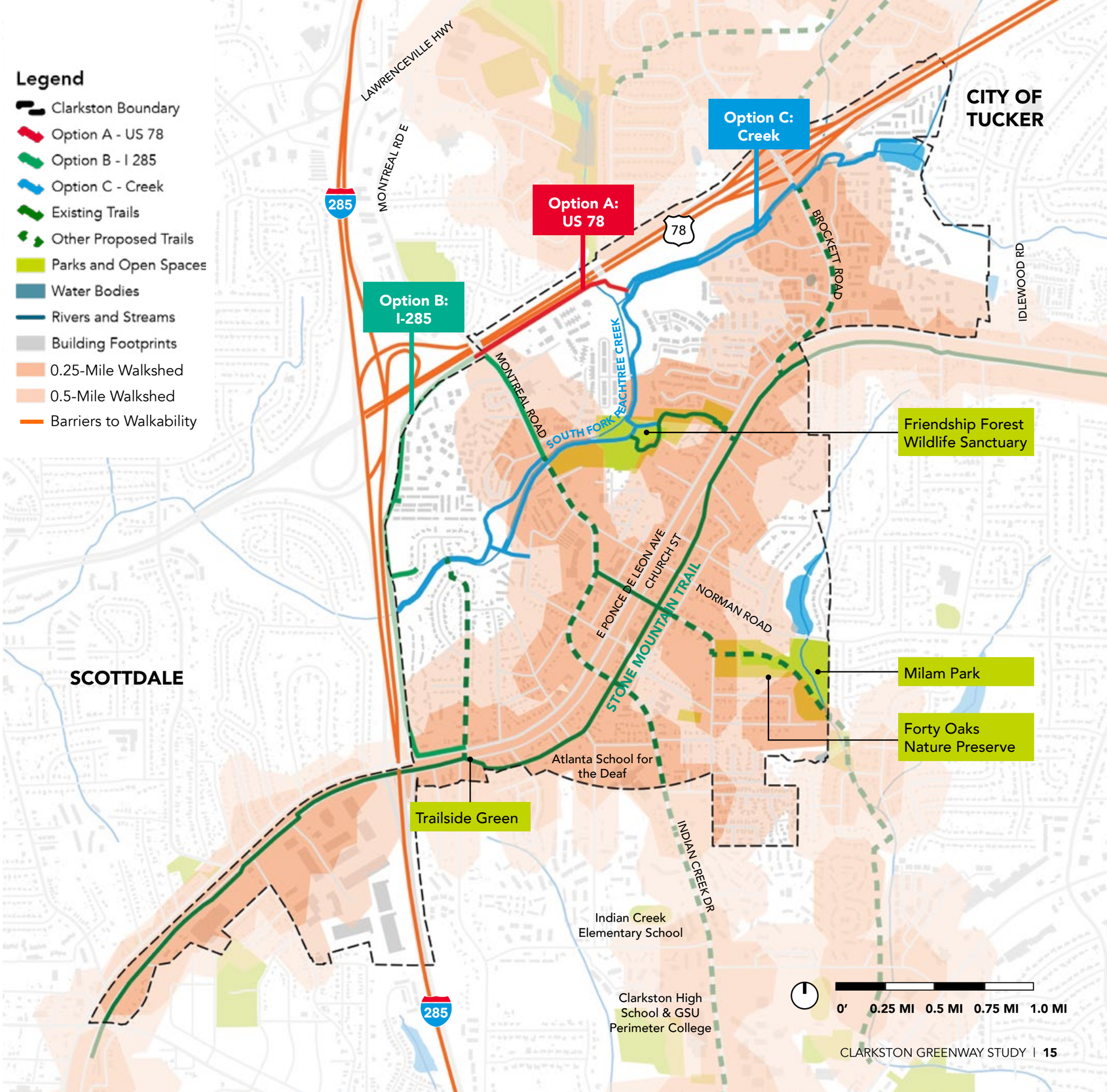
PARKS & TRAILS ACCESS

This map shows 5- and 10-minute walksheds from the various trails and parks within the city using the sidewalk and street network. The network of existing and proposed trails provide connectivity to most parts of the city, excluding areas near the Highway 78 and I-285. Recent streetscape improvement projects implemented by the City, like improvements on Norman Road and Market Street and the pedestrian bridge along Norman Road to Milam Park, have also helped create safer crosswalks and wider sidewalks for pedestrian use.

The railroad tracks and the South Fork Peachtree Creek act as two barriers to connectivity within the city, allowing access across both in few places. The creek presents more of an opportunity to improve connections by constructing a trail along it. I-285 and Highway 78 are walkability barriers from the city to areas beyond, which make walking and cycling to the north and west impossible without major interventions, like tunnels, pedestrian bridges, or trail spurs to existing streets and sidewalks.

How does this inform greenway design?

The proposed greenway trail options will increase connectivity from southwest to northeast but will not improve access across the railroad tracks to the southeastern half of the city. Clarkston needs a broader, more holistic trail network that goes beyond its main arterial roads. This can improve access to Tucker and other nearby municipalities, residences, parks, and various schools in the south, such as the Indian Creek Elementary School, Clarkston High School, Atlanta School for the Deaf, and Georgia State University (GSU) Perimeter College. Regional connections to Tucker and Scottdale are recommended as Phase 6 in Chapter 4, and a future study will determine the feasibility to connect across the railroad tracks, if the City is awarded the funding.

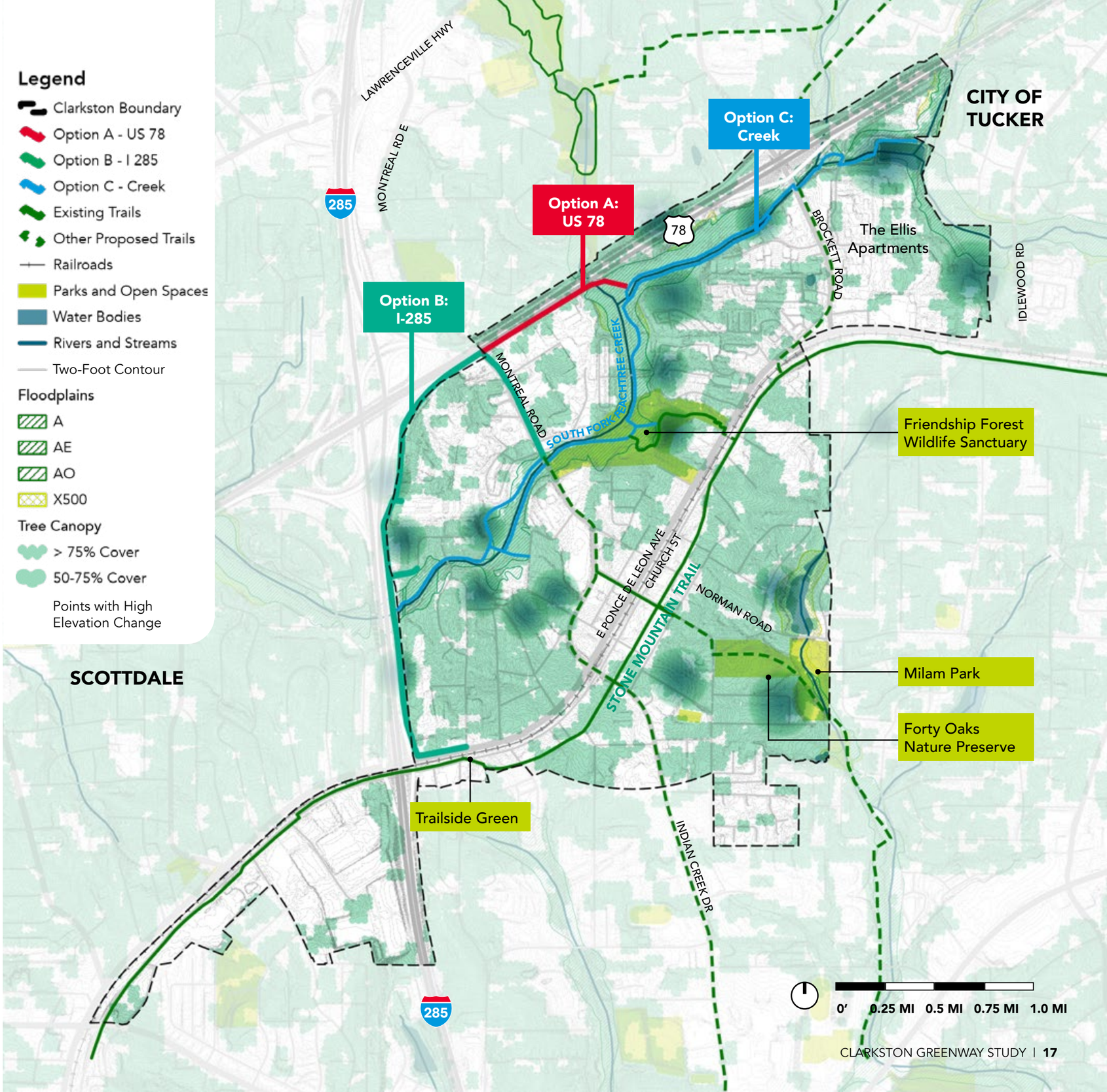


NATURAL RESOURCES

Clarkston's natural resources are few but prominent. The most prominent, but least accessible, is the South Fork Peachtree Creek. The only place residents can safely access the creek is Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, and the rest of the areas around the creek are covered with kudzu overgrowth and woodlands with some specimen trees. The city is home to three large parks that are spread out to provide access to most residents, except for those living in the southwestern-most part of the city. Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary and Forty Oaks Nature Preserve are more focused on preservation and access to nature, and Milam Park includes recreation opportunities with sports courts, the pool, open fields, and pavilions. There are also several pocket parks and trailheads. The tree canopy coverage is spread out in most areas of the city, along the South Fork Peachtree Creek and around the parks, but Ponce de Leon Avenue and Church Street do not have much tree canopy coverage due to the adjacent railroad tracks. To address this, the City of Clarkston has planted over 500 trees on Church Street and Ponce de Leon Avenue since 2018.

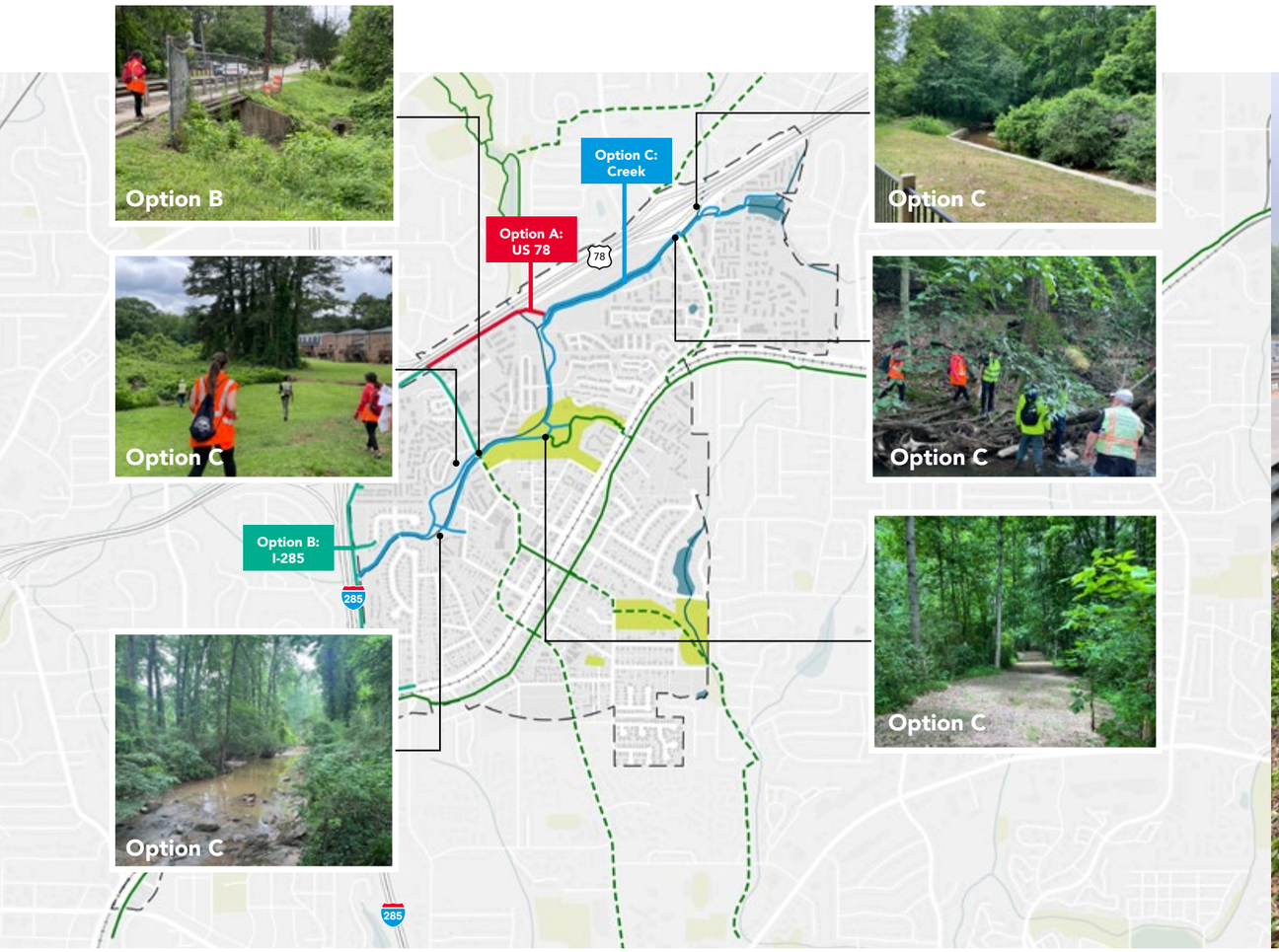
The city has a mild topography change, which becomes steep around South Fork Peachtree Creek, Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, and Milam Park. The topography changes frequently around the creek, meaning that adjacent apartment complexes are not connected to each other. The topography also rises behind the Ellis apartments east of Brockett Road towards the man-made lake, which could serve as a potential overlook for a trail route that follows the creek. A flat, wide sewer easement runs along Option C and connects to Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, and it could serve as a potential trail through an easement agreement with DeKalb County.

Floodplains are located around the South Fork Peachtree Creek and the creek along Milam Park. These are classified as AE Flood Zones, meaning that they present a 1% annual chance of flooding and a 26% chance over the life of a 30-year mortgage, according to FEMA. Trails can be constructed in or near floodplains through careful design that does not impede water flow or percolation into the soil. Paved trails, boardwalks and unpaved, crushed stone or gravel trails are options for floodplains. All trails in floodplains will need proper maintenance after major rain events to ensure they are usable.



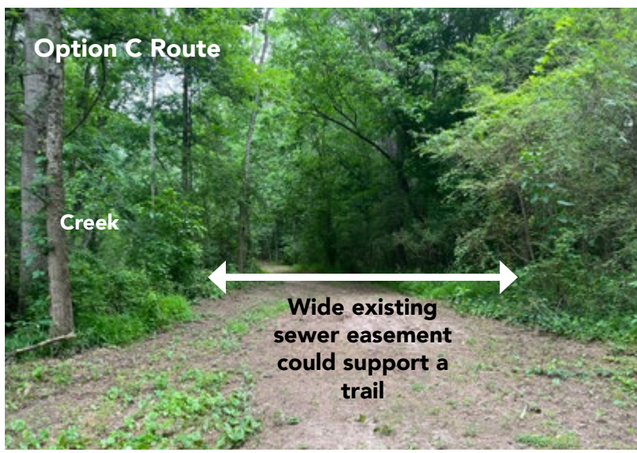
SITE CONDITIONS

The project team assessed the site conditions through site visits along the proposed trail routes and other alternate parallel paths within the city. A map with key observations is on pages 20 and 21, and photos showing some of the conditions are below.









Option A: Highway 78 Route

In general, a route along Highway 78 in GDOT right-of-way may be challenging to accomplish because of the need for right-of-way acquisition or easements and elevation changes to nearby properties that will require additional trail spurs. Trail routes along the highways will also be much louder and unpleasant. Because of this, the team explored alternative routes along the backs of apartment complexes, which will provide greater access and may be more feasible to construct (see images to the below and locations on the map on page 20).

Option B: I-285 and Montreal Road Route

Similar to the Highway 78 route, the segment of Option B directly next to the highway will be difficult to build. There is narrow space next to the on-ramp (see below left), which will require high retaining walls to support the trail. Again, alternative routes along the backs of apartment complexes were explored. These would require easements or land acquisition. The segment along Montreal Road aligns with a City of Clarkston plan to

SITE CONDITIONS

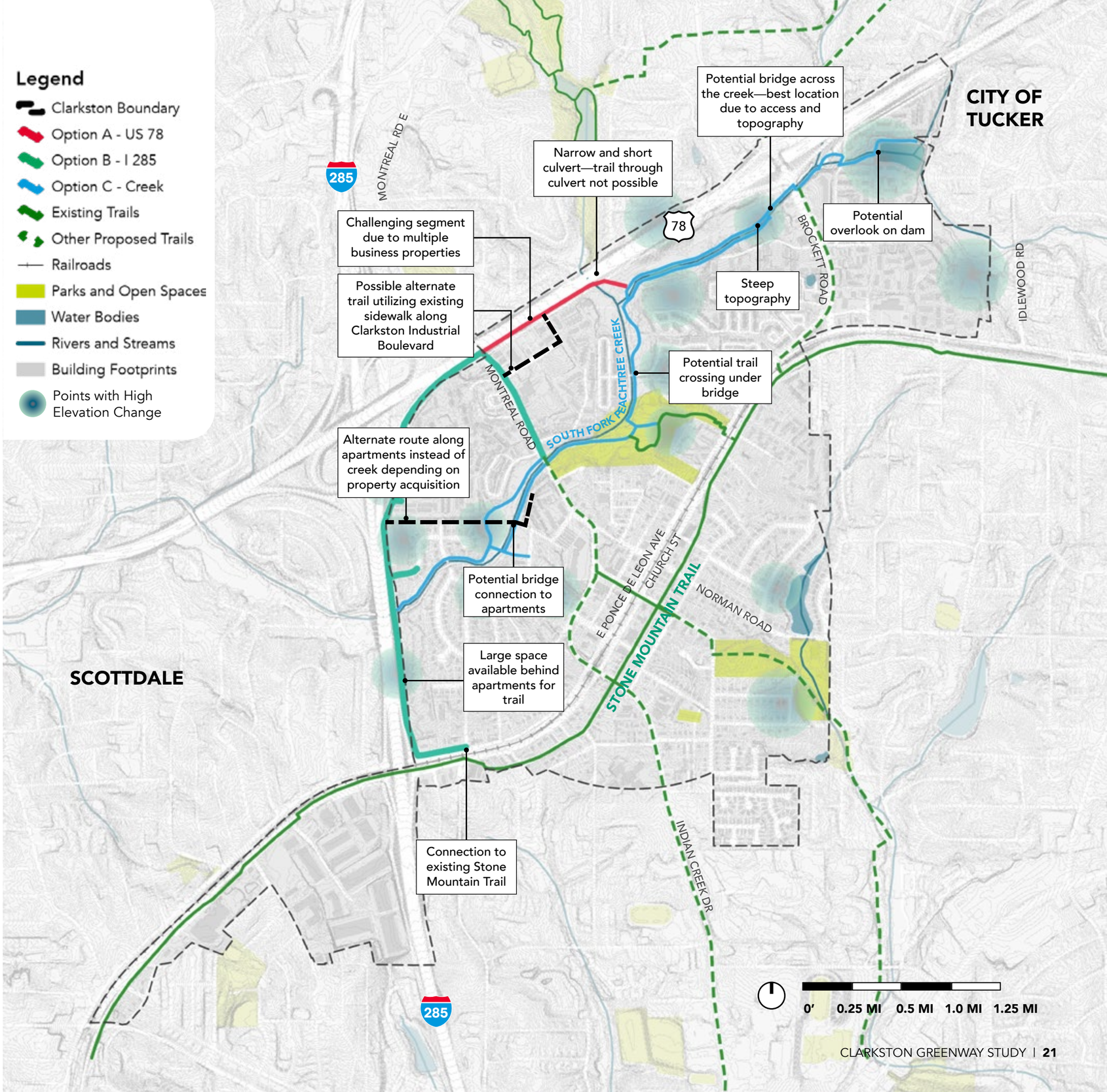
make streetscape improvements and road diet to increase pedestrian safety along the length of the Montreal Road / N. Indian Creek Drive corridor from the County line to City of Tucker with planning funding from the US DOT Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program. Locating a trail here would require the addition of safe crossings and potential mid-block crossings.

Option C: Creek Route

The South Fork Peachtree Creek is not fully accessible due to significant elevation changes, fences, trees, and overgrown vegetation. If this route is selected, the trail may need to switch sides of the creek with bridges because of space constraints and elevation changes. Bridges will add significant cost, particularly when the bridge needs to span a longer distance to ensure the trail's elevation meets ADA standards. Montreal Road can by crossed in two places — along the creek or at the Clarkston Industrial Boulevard. Both these locations will require traffic calming and signage to create safe crossing zones. The middle section of the creek, which runs through the Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, has a wide and flat existing sewer easement that could support a trail. In the northern part, from Brockett Road to the City of Tucker, the creek runs behind multi-family housing complexes and can only be reached via steep topography. This stretch will require clearing of trees and trash, along with additional access points.

Other Observations

Additional site constraints and opportunities were explored. For example, the team evaluated an existing culvert under Highway 78 to determine if it was feasible for a trail to connect Option C - South Fork Peachtree Creek route north to the city of Tucker. The dimensions of the culvert are not suitable for pedestrian use, likely making it cost prohibitive. Other locations were identified for bridges, creek crossings, overlooks, and alternative routes for the greenway (black dashed lines on the map).



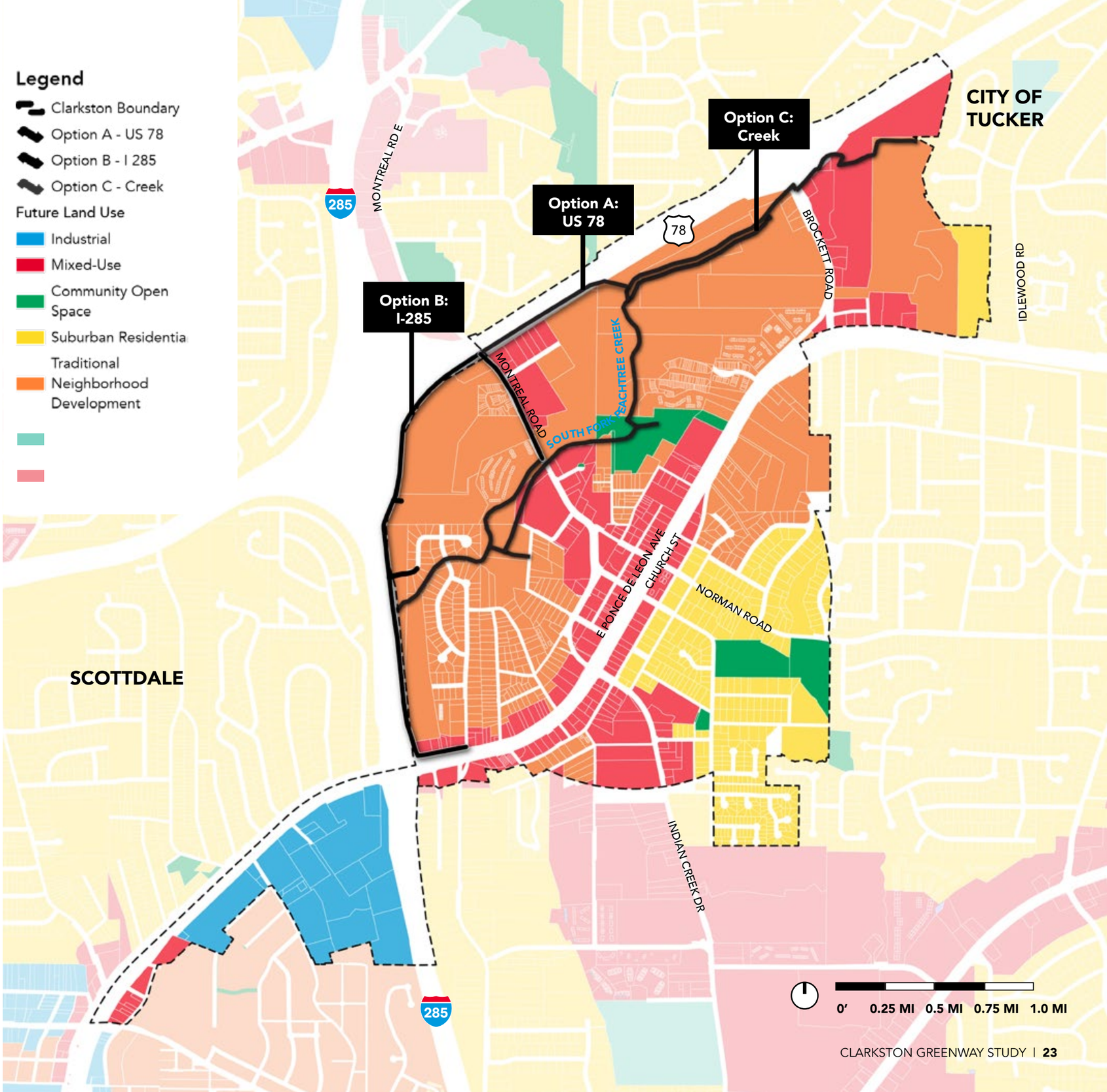
FUTURE LAND USE

Clarkston's Future Land Use Plan was released in 2021 as part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The simplified land use plan designates a Mixed-Use zone in the downtown area and along Montreal Road / N. Indian Creek Drive. The northern half of the city falls within the Traditional Neighborhood Development type, while the southern half is dominated by Single-Family Suburban Residential.

The proposed trails are all in the northwestern half of the city (north of the railroad), bisecting 'traditional neighborhood development' zones and connecting to mixed-use zones via Brockett Road, Montreal Road, and Ponce de Leon Avenue. The traditional neighborhood development zone is meant to include various housing types, such as apartments, single-family homes, cottage courts, and townhouses. Currently, this zone has large multi-family housing complexes connected via internal streets that limit public access to the broader street network and interstates.

How does this inform greenway design?

Traditional Neighborhood Development areas surround the proposed trail routes, which will help with connecting more residents to more places by walking or biking. The land use designation around the proposed trails may need modification depending on the creation of public parks, playgrounds, gardens, trail entrances, and / or other community gathering spaces.



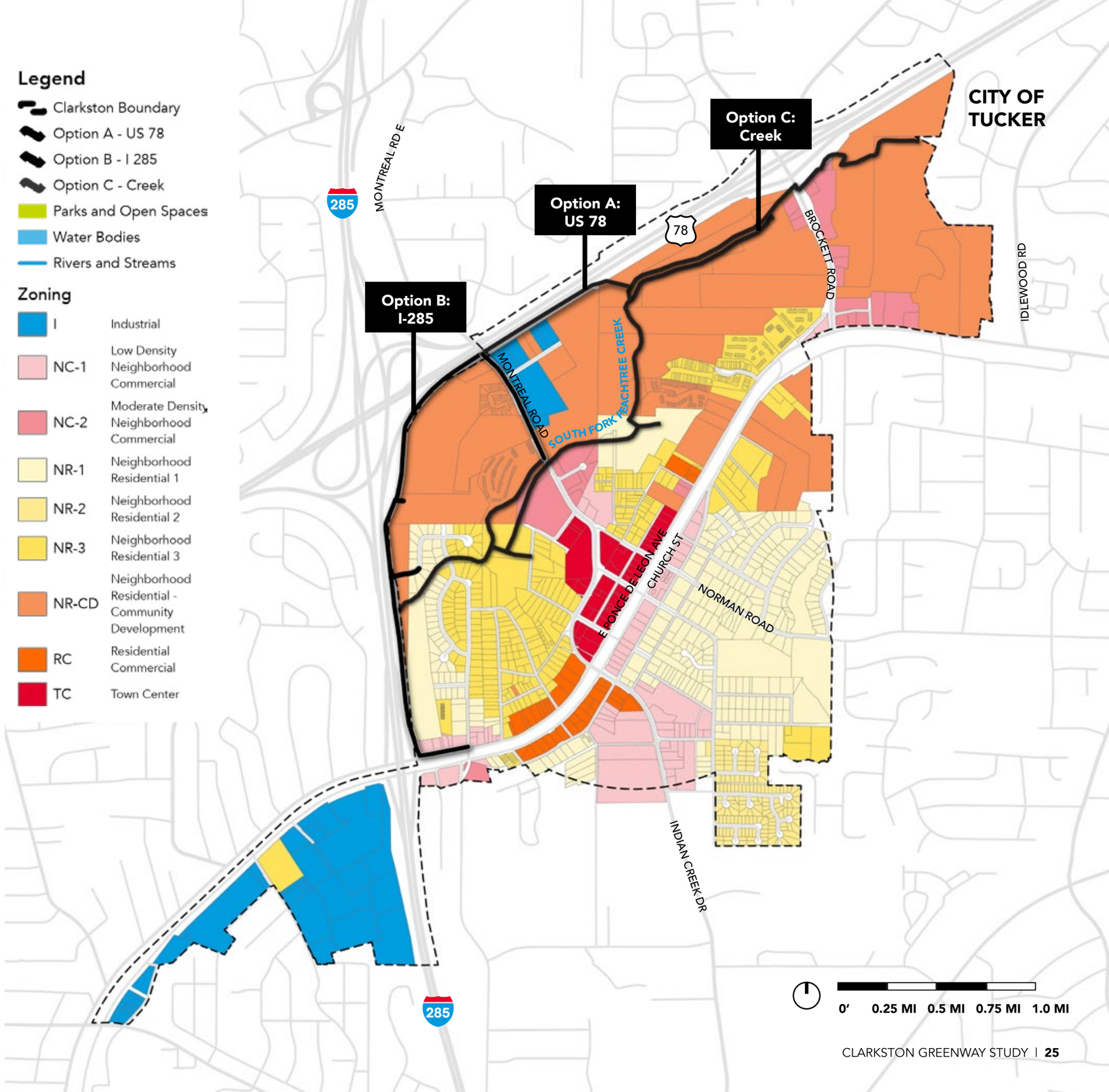
EXISTING ZONING

Clarkston's zoning, adopted in 2016 and updated in 2023, enforces planning policies and codes established in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The majority of the city is governed by residential zoning, referred to as NR-1, NR-2, or NR-3, which designate different levels of density and lot treatment. These areas allow single-family subdivisions, townhomes, and condominiums. The downtown core north of Ponce de Leon Avenue is designated as TC - Town Center, which allows for the highest density within the city and a mix of residential and commercial uses.

The NR-CD designation is dominant around the different trail options and refers to residential areas with a majority of multi-family housing. Properties along Brockett Road and Montreal Road also have zones of NC-2 - Moderate Density Neighborhood Commercial. The LI - Light Industrial zones along Montreal Road currently house the Georgia Piedmont Technical College, some small apartment buildings, the Debre Bisrat St. Gabriel, and other commercial establishments.

How does this inform greenway design?

The greenway trail options will not require an immediate rezoning of any property because all zoning designations allow open space, parks, and trails within them; however, trail placement may be more successful where adopted city policy supports higher density development.





Physical & Mental Health



Connecting Places



Parks & Nature



Equity & Resilience



Cost & Feasibility

CLARKSTON DEMOGRAPHICS

The goals of this project (summarized on the left) will not be accomplished by only considering physical and site conditions. The city's demographic indicators must be considered as well.

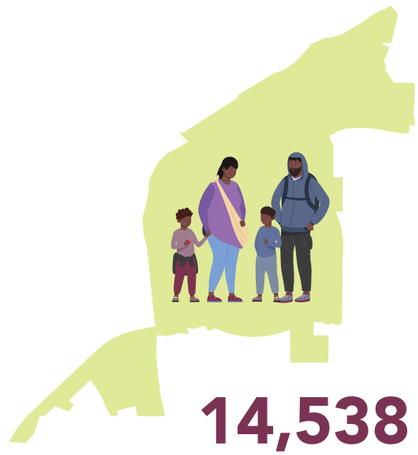
Clarkston covers an area of 1.86 square miles. In 2023, Clarkston registered a population of 14,538—a 200% increase from 2010, from migration and the city's 2016 annexation of additional land area. The city is part of the Welcoming America network, which aims to build inclusive communities and create a culture that makes newcomers feel valued. Between 2017 to 2021, approximately 50% of the population was foreign-born; Clarkston, Lilburn, and parts of Norcross and Chamblee are among the only places in the Atlanta region where more than half the residents are foreign-born. Considered "the most diverse square mile in the United States," Clarkston is home to people from over 40 nationalities, ranging from Nepal and Afghanistan to Somalia and Iraq.

Clarkston's median household income in 2021 was $48,643—30% lower than the Atlanta region's median income for the same year—and 25.9% of the city's residents are estimated to be in poverty. The city is dominated by rental housing, which has made it an attractive location for refugees and immigrants. Between 2017 and 2021, an average of only 9.4% of housing units were owner-occupied (ACS 5-year estimate). According to previous studies and plans, like Clarkston Speaks conducted by the Georgia Institute of Technology, the desire for homeownership has pushed some residents further away, to places like Stone Mountain, which are more affordable.

The city has an equal proportion of male and female residents, along with a large youth population; 35.9% of the city is estimated to be under 18 years old, compared to Atlanta's 17.4%.

Data sources, above: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2010-2014 5-year estimates, and American Community Survey 2017-2021 5-year estimates.

Data sources, right: U.S. Census "Quick Facts," 2021.



14,538

The population of Clarkston in 2023

Atlanta Median Income
$69,164

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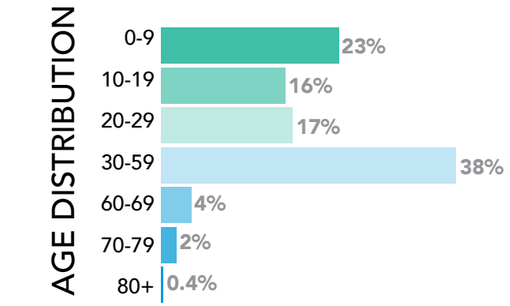
Clarkston Median Income
$48,643

Residents spend 35% of their income on housing and transportation





COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS

DRIVE ALONE



63%

CARPOOL



22%

PUBLIC TRANSIT



7%

TAXI



5%

WALK & BIKE

3%

DEMOGRAPHICS

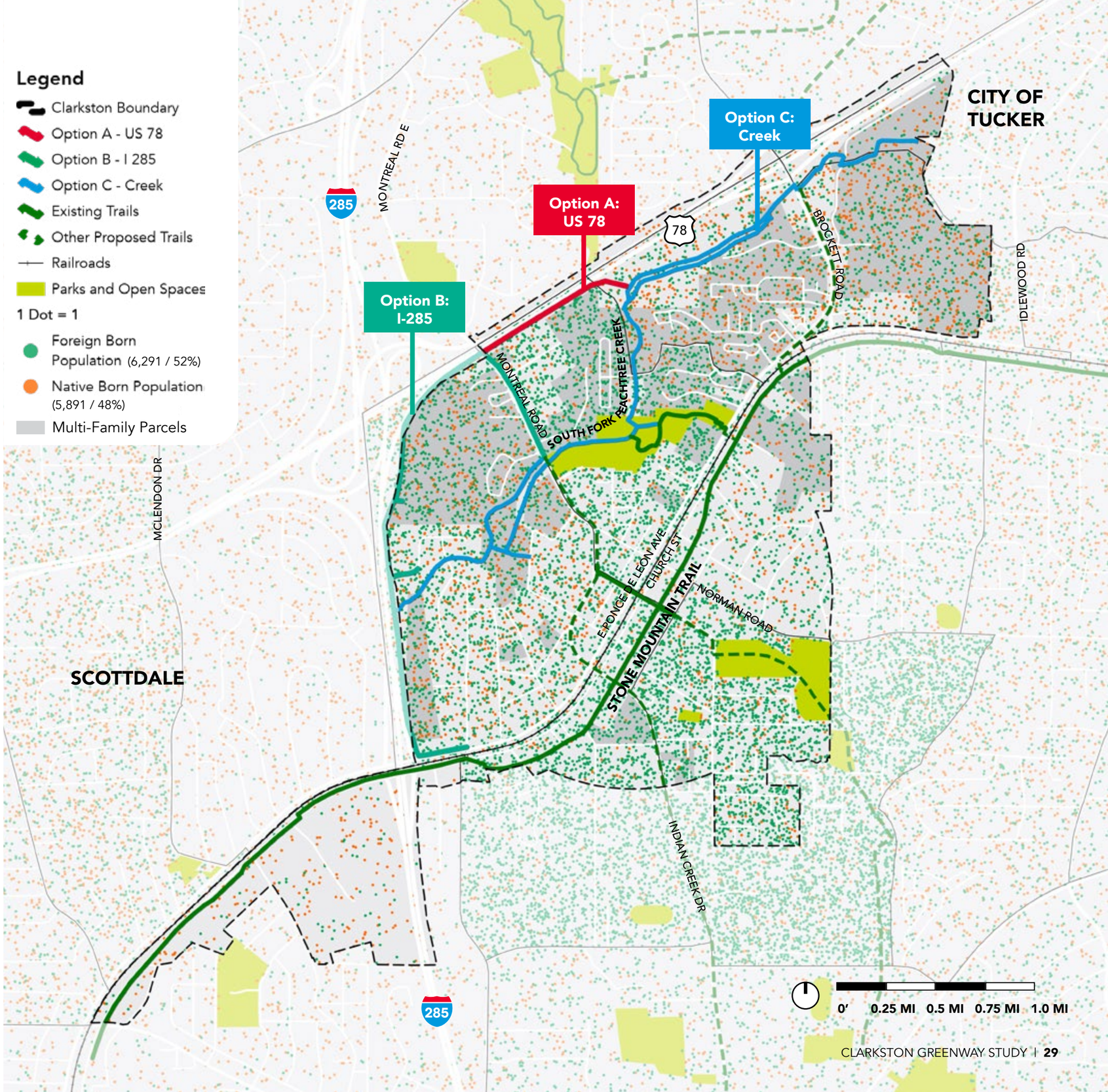
POPULATION DENSITY

The map to the right shows population density by native- and foreign-born residents by Census tract, where each dot represents one person. It is important to note that the dots are normalized by Census tract, four of which are located in Clarkston's boundaries, and are not placed exactly where individuals live. The dark gray shows properties with apartment complexes within the city limits, and it is evident that the population density is higher in these areas. It is also evident that Clarkston has a higher population density than the areas of unincorporated DeKalb County to the north and west and the southern end of Tucker.

The foreign-born population (shown in green dots) are concentrated to the western and southern edges of the city. A large foreign-born population also resides just outside the city limits on the southeastern end. A large proportion of the native-born population (shown in orange dots) lives close to Tucker and to the northwest. The demographics of these areas are also reflected in vehicle ownership, poverty levels, households that speak foreign languages, and in other factors shown in maps from pages 30 to 46.

How does this inform greenway design?

The proposed trail options will benefit both native-born and foreign-born populations in the city, but they will not be directly accessible to foreign-born populations in the southern parts of the city and just outside the city limits in unincorporated DeKalb County. This reinforces the importance of safe sidewalks and crosswalks, which may require some partnership with DeKalb County, to make it easier for those residents to reach Clarkston.



DEMOGRAPHICS

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX

The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) is a part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) effort to measure how well a community is prepared to respond to crises. The degree to which a community has certain social conditions, like high poverty, low access to vehicles, or crowded households, may affect the ability to prevent suffering and financial loss. This index helps planners and public health officials identify communities that may need more assistance and determine how to help them with food, evacuation, shelters, and more. It has been updated every two years based on Census data, and it maps out the relative vulnerability of every U.S. Census tract through percentiles. A higher percentile indicates higher vulnerability.

There are 4 SVI Themes that each consider different variables:

1. Socioeconomic Status

- Below 150% poverty
- Unemployed
- Housing cost burden
- No high school diploma
- No health insurance

2. Household Characteristics

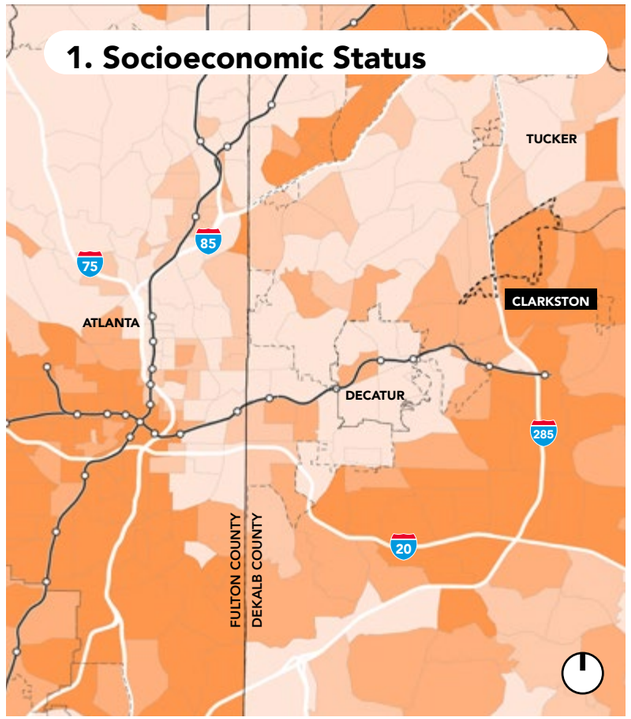
- Aged 65 & older
- Aged 17 & younger
- Civilian with a disability
- Single-parent households
- English language proficiency

3. Racial & Ethnic Minority Status

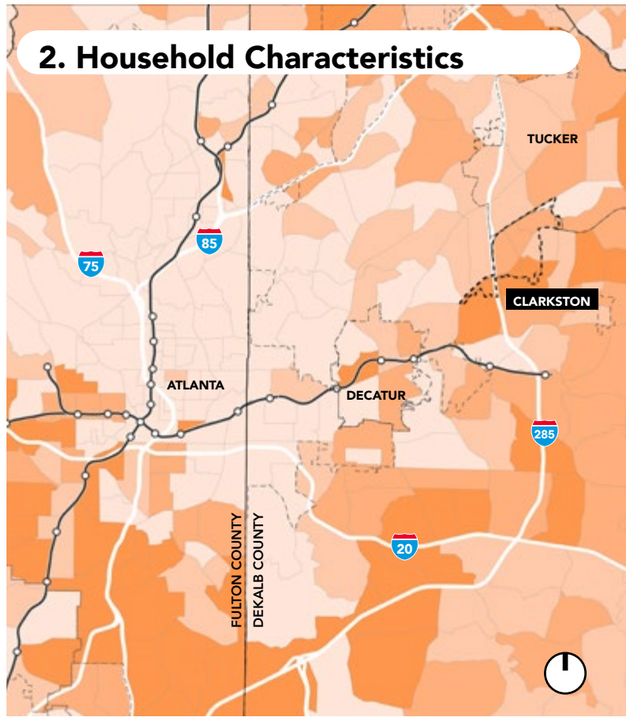
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black and African American
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Two or More Races, Not Hispanic or Latino
- Other Races, Not Hispanic or Latino

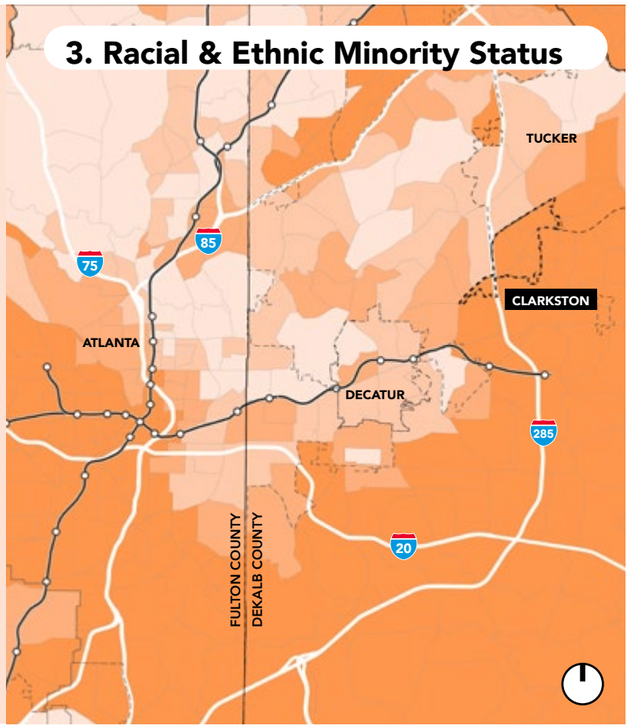
4. Housing Type & Transportation

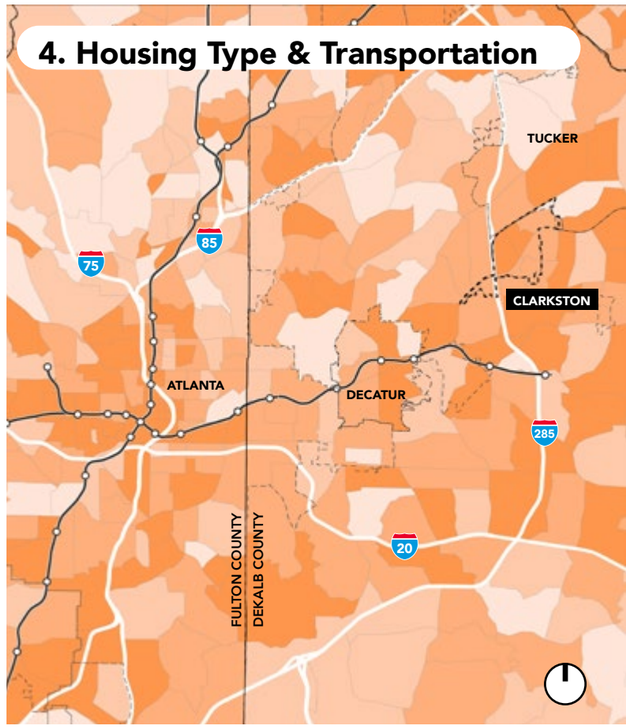
- Multi-unit structures
- Mobile homes
- Crowding
- No vehicle
- Group quarters



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry/ Geospatial Research, Analysis, and Services Program. CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index [2020 Database [Georgia]







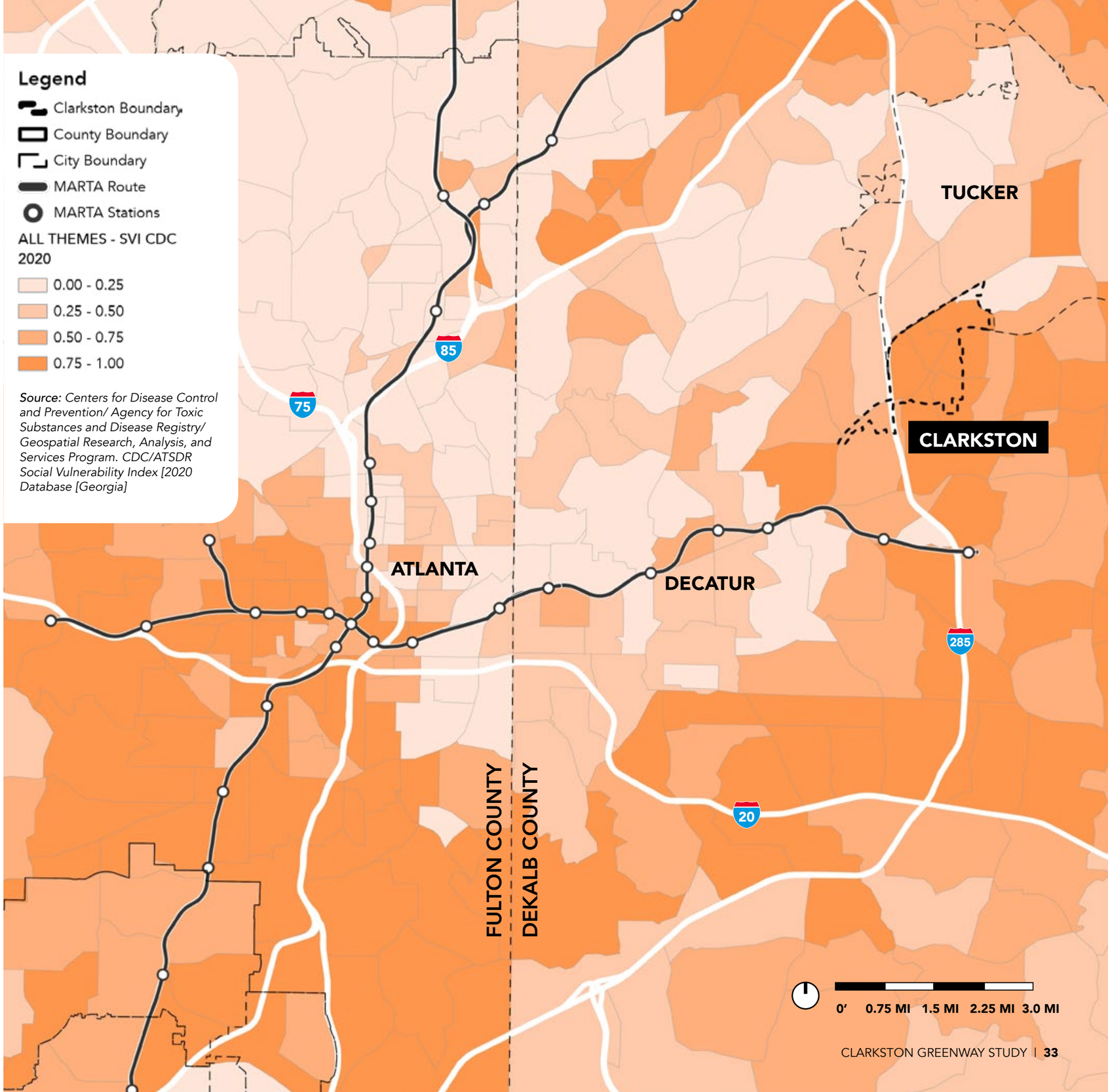
DEMOGRAPHICS

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX

The map to the right combines all four of the SVI indicators summarized on the previous pages to comprehensively show the vulnerability of communities depending on their social conditions. The data is mapped onto Census tracts and presented as percentages of households within the Census tract. Clarkston, parts of west and south Fulton County, and south DeKalb County are extremely vulnerable: 75% to 100% of households in the corresponding Census tracts are vulnerable.

How does this inform greenway design?

Many interventions will be needed to address the vulnerable populations in Clarkston, including access to high-quality housing, education, physical and mental health services, better transportation overall, access to healthy food, and more. However, a well-connected trail network can be a step in addressing physical and mental health and safely connecting important destinations for more people. A trail through the city can help with reduced household costs from access to quality, low-cost transportation, improved physical health from additional exercise, and improved mental health from access to nature.



HOUSEHOLDS

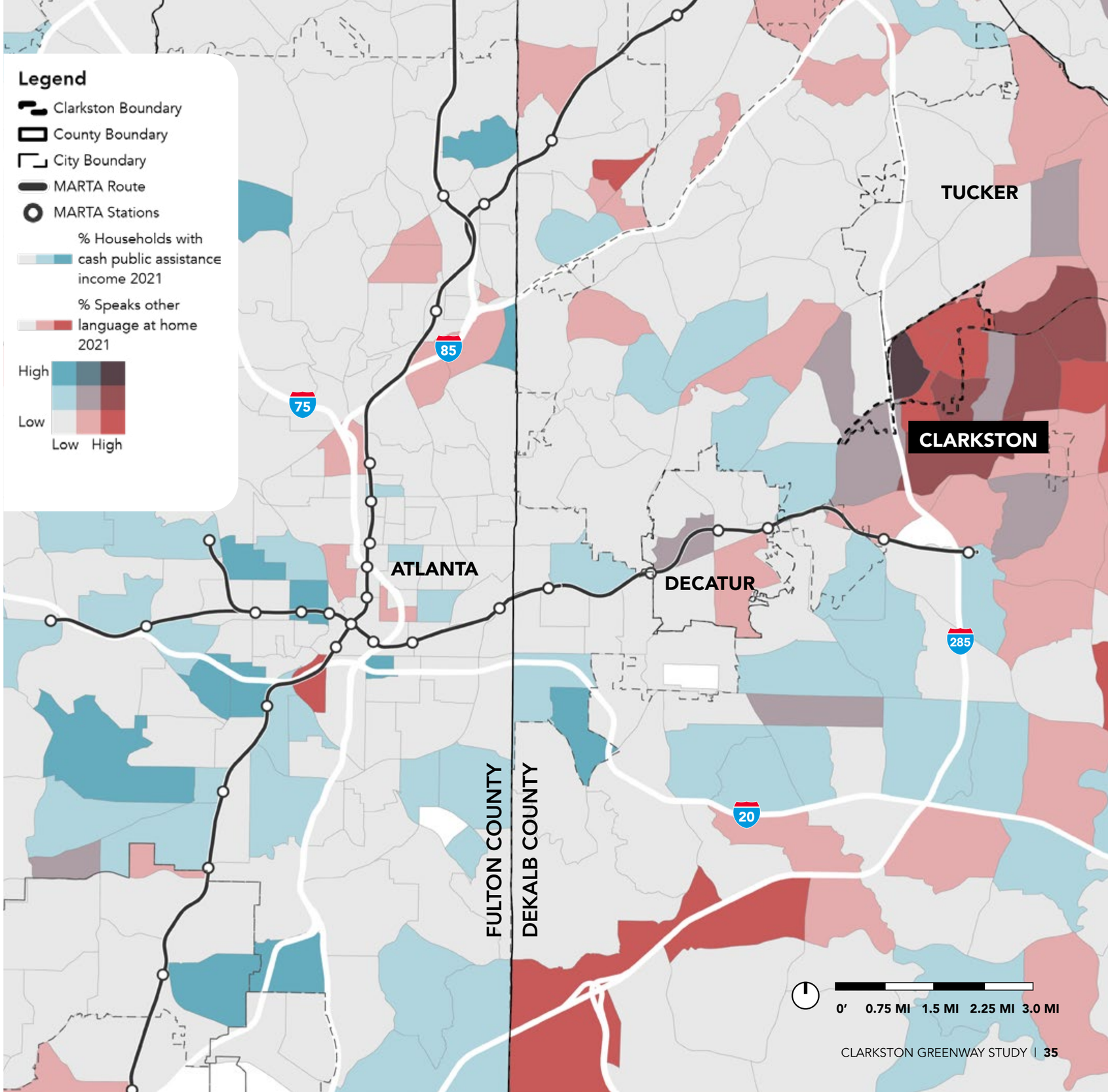
CASH ASSISTANCE + FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME

This map shows a bivariate (two variables) plot with the percentage of households that received cash assistance income in 2022 and the percentage of households that speak a language other than English at home. These are mapped per Census tract, four of which are located in Clarkston's boundaries.

Clarkston and its surrounding areas stand out in a dark red / purple compared to the rest of the areas shown, indicating a high percentage and overlap between both the factors. The refugee and immigrant community in the greater Atlanta region is concentrated in or near Clarkston; 31.8% of the population is foreign-born and residents here speak over 60 languages. Many residents earn a median income that is below the regional average and receive public cash assistance income. This overlap is particularly evident in the northwestern section of the City closest to I-285, where many large apartment complexes are located. These individuals may benefit the most from access to a trail.

How does this inform greenway design?

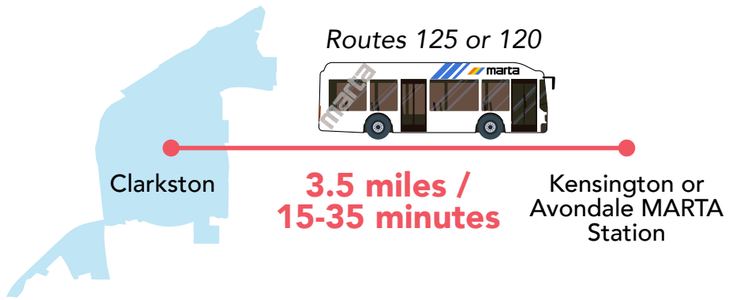
Individuals living in apartment communities near the potential trail routes in the northwest quadrant of the city may benefit the most from access to a trail because of income constraints that may prohibit access to a vehicle. Trail routes directly connecting these residents to main corridors to access MARTA buses or other daily needs could meet some of their transportation needs.



HOUSEHOLDS

NO VEHICLE AT HOME + HOUSEHOLDS BELOW POVERTY

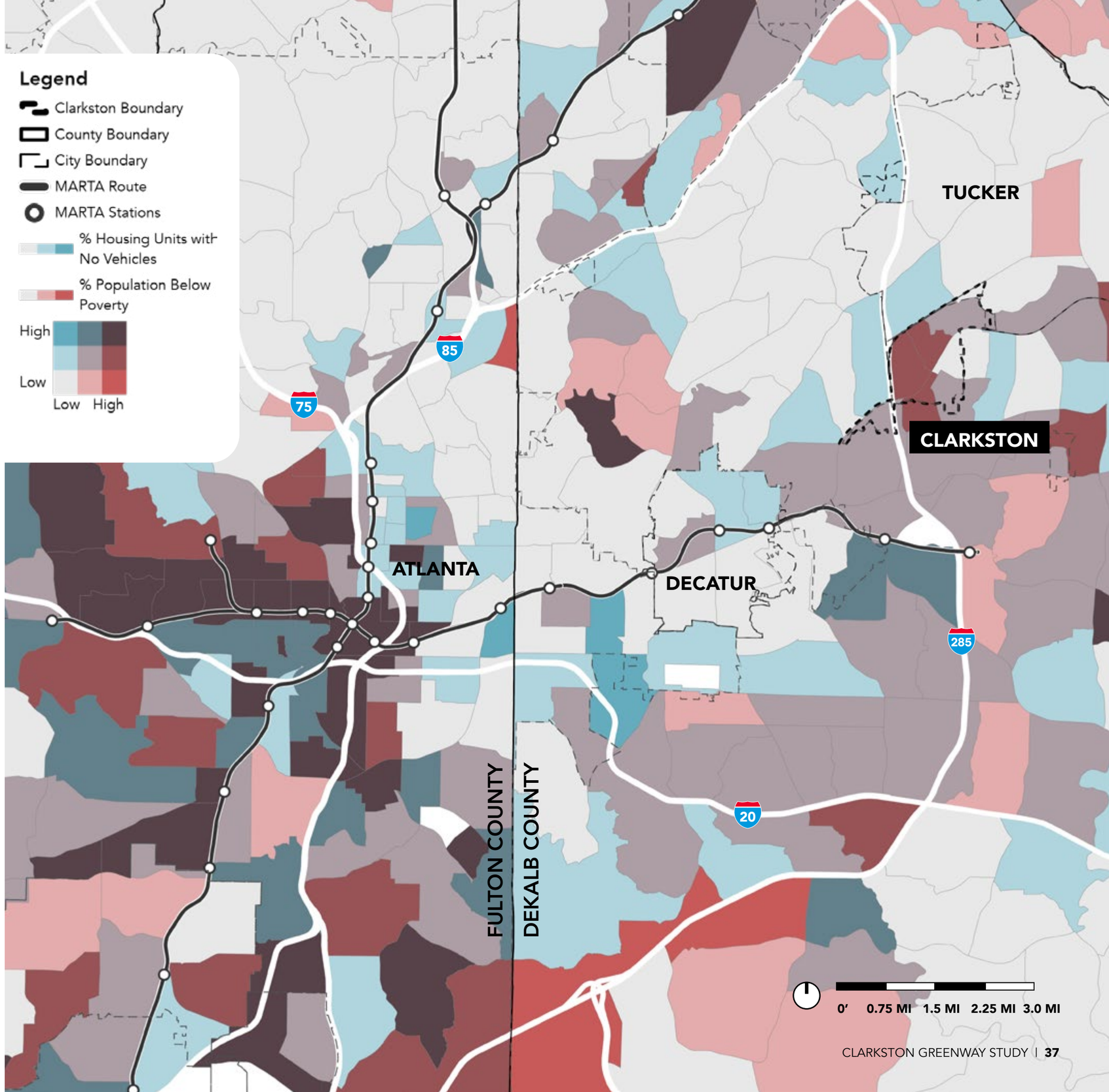
The U.S. Census Bureau's poverty threshold for a family with two adults and one child was $21,811 in 2021. This is the official measurement of poverty used by the federal government. The map shows a bivariate plot of the percentage of population within a Census tract that are below the poverty threshold and that do not own vehicles. Parts of west and south Atlanta have high concentrations of both characteristics with extreme overlap. These areas, along with Midtown and Downtown Atlanta, have households with no vehicles, but they have access to the MARTA train routes. While Clarkston does not rank as highly as west Atlanta, there is still a large percentage of households without vehicles. The city is only serviced by two MARTA bus routes and the closest MARTA train station is Kensington, a 15-minute bus ride for residents. The long headways (time between buses on each route) create an additional connectivity barrier because if a rider misses a bus, they could wait 20 minutes for the 120 during peak times or 30 minutes during off-peak times, and 30 minutes in peak times or 45 minutes during off-peak times for the 125. The proposed trail network will help with local connectivity between residents and their destinations, but additional transportation changes will be needed to help residents without vehicles.





$21,811

Household income poverty threshold



HOUSEHOLDS

OVERCROWDED HOUSING UNITS

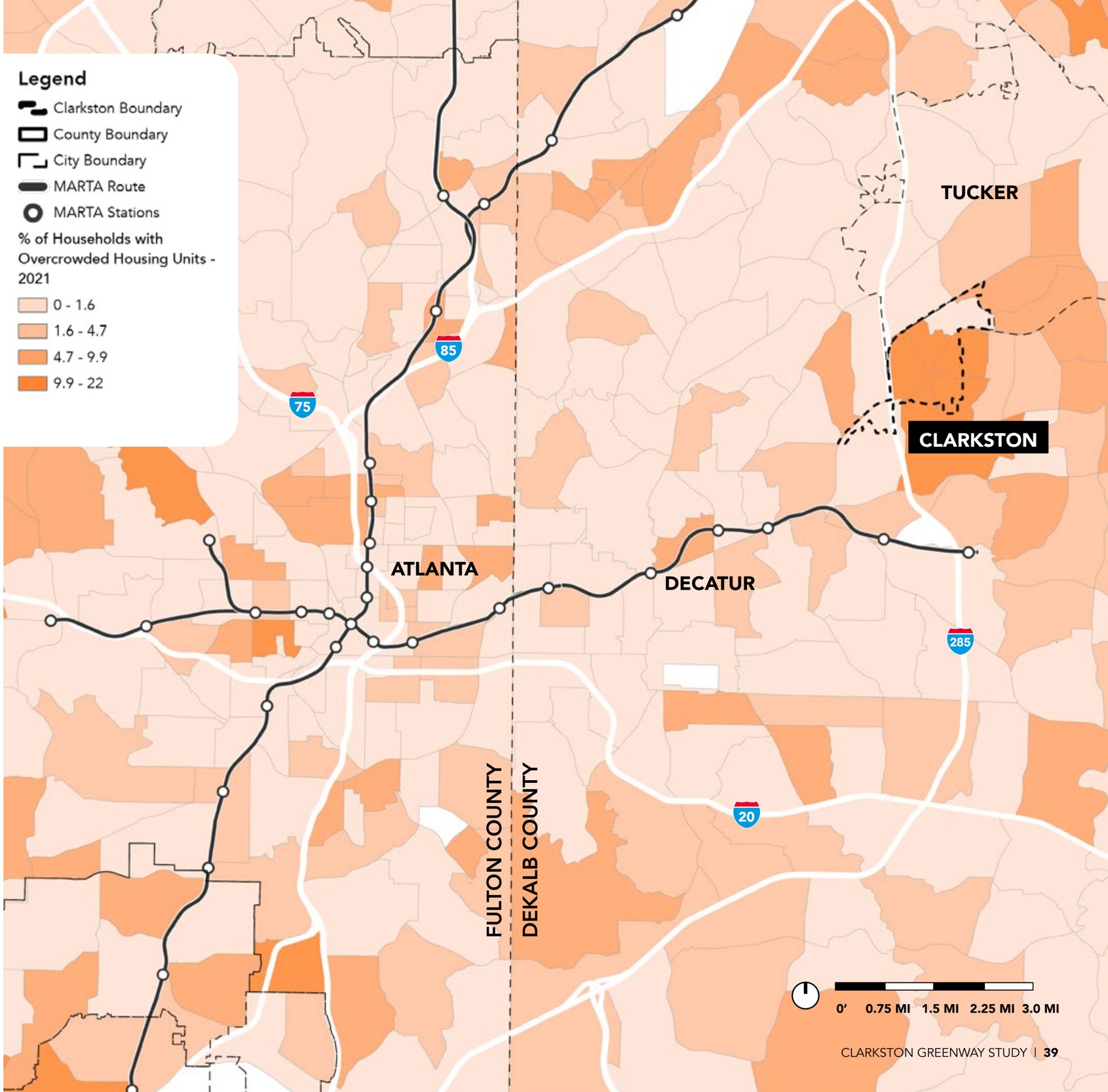
According to the Census, a household is considered to be overcrowded if there is more than one person per one room in the housing unit (excluding balconies, porches, foyers, hallways, bathrooms, and half-rooms). Severely crowded homes are those with more than 1.5 persons per room. Overcrowded housing units have been used to measure the spread of communicable diseases, impacts on child growth and development, household hazards, and more recently, how populations are impacted by COVID-19.

According to the Pew Research Center, 26% of foreign-born Americans live in multi-generational homes, compared to 17% of U.S.-born Americans. This could account for why foreign-born, non-U.S. citizens have the highest share of overcrowded households within the United States.[1]

How does this inform greenway design?

This map shows how Clarkston and parts of west Atlanta have a higher percentage of overcrowded housing units (9.9% to 22% of households within the Census tract). The multi-generational nature of living within the community can increase the need for outdoor spaces that all members of the household can access and enjoy. These become especially important during health crises such as COVID-19, to help residents safely use places for recreation and mental health.

1 *ICF International Analysis of AHS Data*



HEALTH AS A DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATOR

The built environment has a huge influence on the health and quality of life in communities. The design of neighborhoods, streets, and public spaces can determine the level of physical activity, mental well-being, and the prevalence of poor health. Non-existent or inconsistent sidewalks and bike lanes can dissuade people from walking and biking, leading to a sedentary lifestyle; the absence of parks, open spaces, and nature trails can affect mental health; and lower access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food can lead to health disparities and higher rates of obesity and chronic ailments.

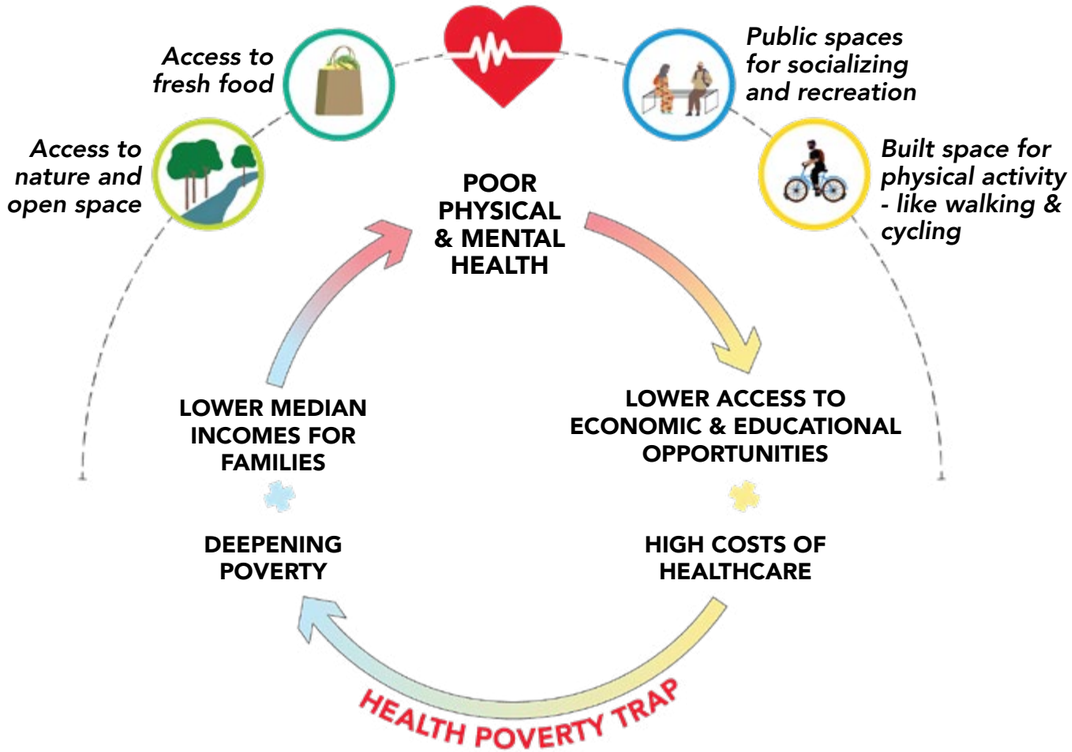
These factors have an escalating impact on communities that are in poverty. When the built environment contributes to poor physical and mental health, residents have lower chances of accessing economic and educational opportunities due to absenteeism, reduced concentration skills, and higher stress. Poor health is further exacerbated by inaccessibility to timely and affordable healthcare.[1] These factors ultimately lead to lower median incomes in households and deepen poverty, in some cases. This negative feedback loop is known as the health poverty trap.[2]

In Clarkston, health has been a recurring theme in community conversations. Mental health has been cited as an important topic, especially for refugees and immigrants. Limited access to fresh food and amenities for physical activity are felt by residents every day, who often travel to neighboring cities to use parks and visit supermarkets.

1 *"Why Education Matters to Health: Exploring the Causes." Center on Society and Health, August 11, 2023. societyhealth.vcu.edu/work/the-projects/why-education-matters-to-health-exploring-the-causes.html#gsc.tab=0.*

2 *"Health, Income, And Poverty: Where We Are And What Could Help," Health Affairs Health Policy Brief, October 4, 2018. DOI: 10.1377/hpb20180817.901935.*

HOW DOES THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT IMPACT HEALTH?





Walk with a Doc event at Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary. Access to nature for improved mental and physical health is important for people of all ages.

HEALTH INDICATORS

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY + MENTAL HEALTH DISTRESS

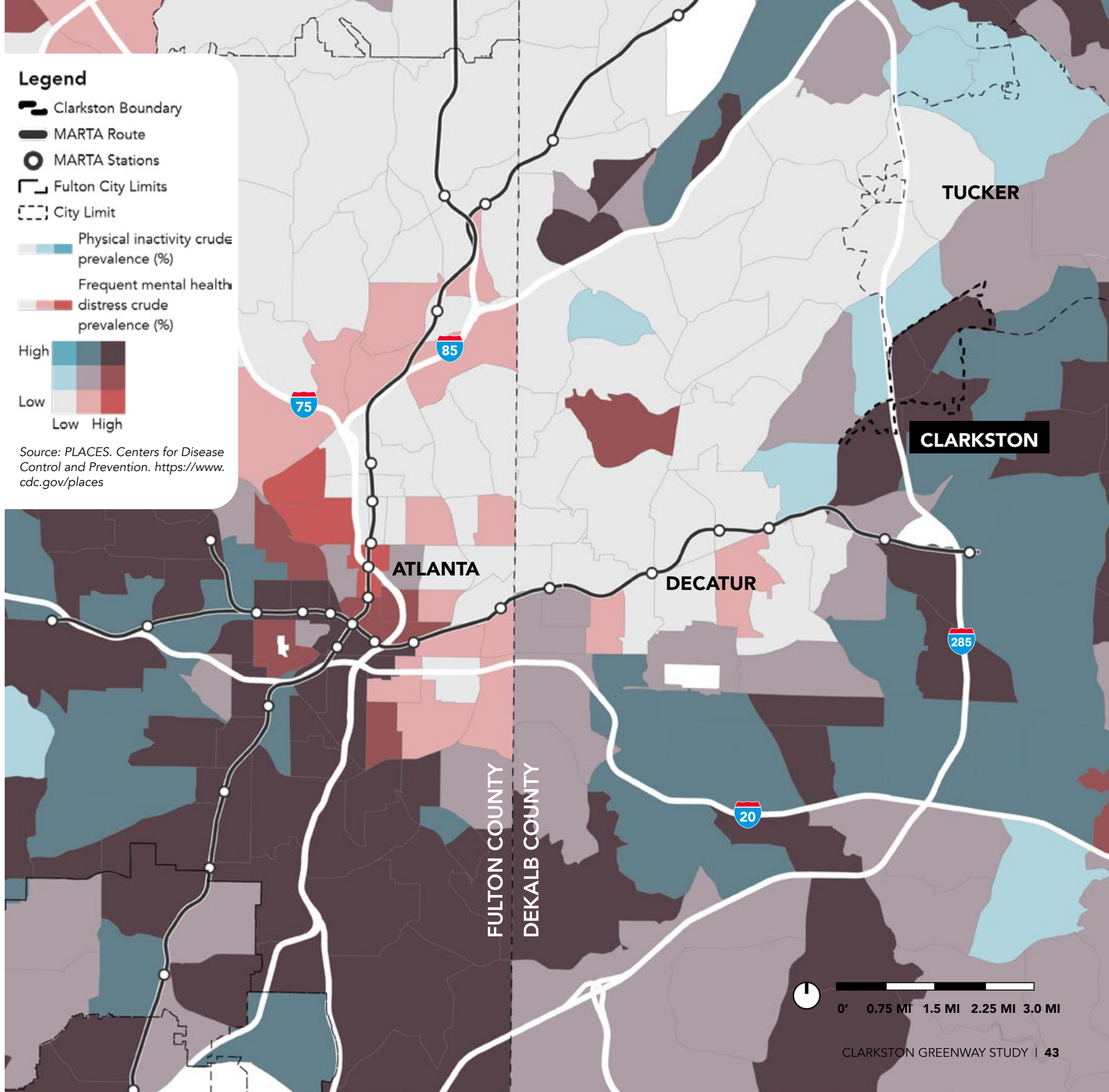
PLACES (Population Level Analysis and Community Estimates) is a CDC-led project in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that maps chronic disease measures throughout the entire United States. The project looks at 29 variables to understand the various health issues that affect residents and the geographic distribution of health burdens. It is also used to develop health objectives and implement disease prevention activities, programs, and policies.

The map to the right plots both the percentage of physical inactivity per population of Census tract and frequent mental health distress per population of Census tract. Physical inactivity is considered when adults do not participate in activities such as running, walking, exercising, and gardening over a month. Frequent mental health distress is defined as 14 or more self-reported mentally unhealthy days in the past 30 days.[1]

Clarkston, along with a large swath of west and south Atlanta show a high percentage and overlap of both factors. As previously mentioned, physical and mental health can be addressed by building a trail throughout Clarkston.

How does this inform greenway design?

Physical health can be improved for Clarkston residents by using active (biking or walking) transportation to run errands, go to work, or recreate. Mental health can be improved by access to nature and building community by seeing and meeting neighbors or participating in community programs along the trails and in parks.



1 *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Measuring Healthy Days. Atlanta, Georgia: CDC, November 2000.*

HEALTH INDICATORS

FRESH FOOD ACCESS - SUPERMARKETS & FOOD MARTS

This map looks at community health through the lens of access to fresh and healthy food by identifying major supermarkets and food marts in Clarkston and its immediate surroundings.

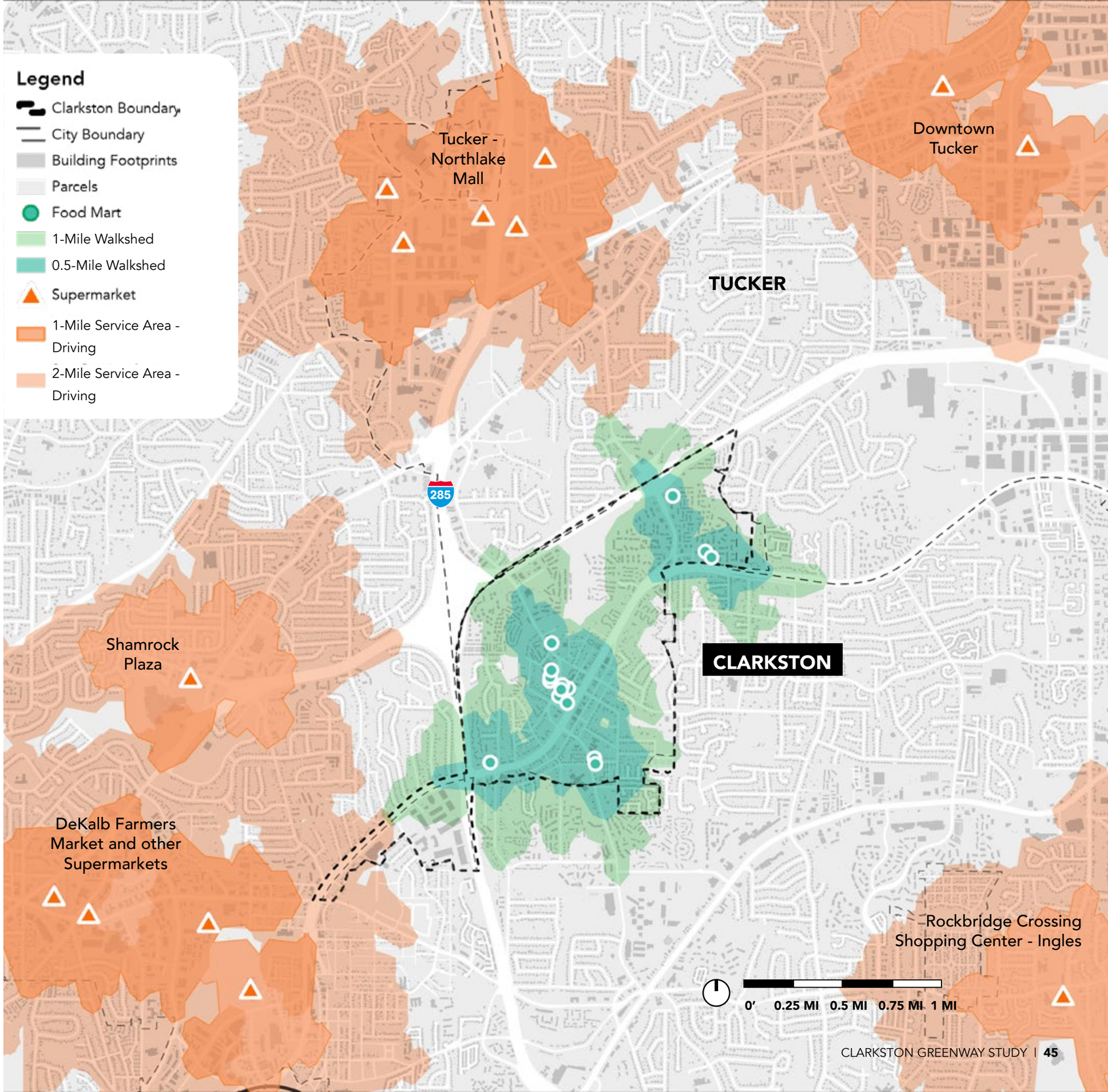
Supermarkets and supercenters are considered large grocery stores with more than 25 employees, such as Publix, Kroger, Aldi, Sprouts, Whole Foods, or Ingles. These are shown in orange triangles; a one- to two-mile service area is plotted from these places as they are typically destinations that people drive to. The green circles indicate smaller food marts with a corresponding half- to one-mile walkshed because they are typically neighborhood grocery stores that people can walk to.

Within Clarkston, there are many food marts—located in downtown, along Ponce de Leon Avenue or on Brockett Road. While these food marts offer international groceries from countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, there is limited availability of fresh produce. Supermarkets are all located outside of Clarkston, and mostly located more than two miles away in Tucker, Decatur, or Stone Mountain.

Clarkston is considered a food desert, which is defined by the USDA as areas with limited access to affordable and healthy food. Most of the Census tracts in Clarkston are classified as low-income and low-access areas, meaning that the poverty rate is 20% or higher, and more than 33% of residents are more than one mile away from the nearest supermarket or large grocery store. The map on page 36 show that many Clarkston residents do not own a car, which presents further challenges to accessing fresh and healthy food beyond the city.

How does this inform greenway design?

Greenways can help increase access to existing public transportation networks that allow people to more easily access supermarkets in the vicinity. Community gardens can also be integrated into the trail design, allowing for community ownership and programming.



HEALTH INDICATORS

FAIR OR POOR HEALTH PREVALENCE

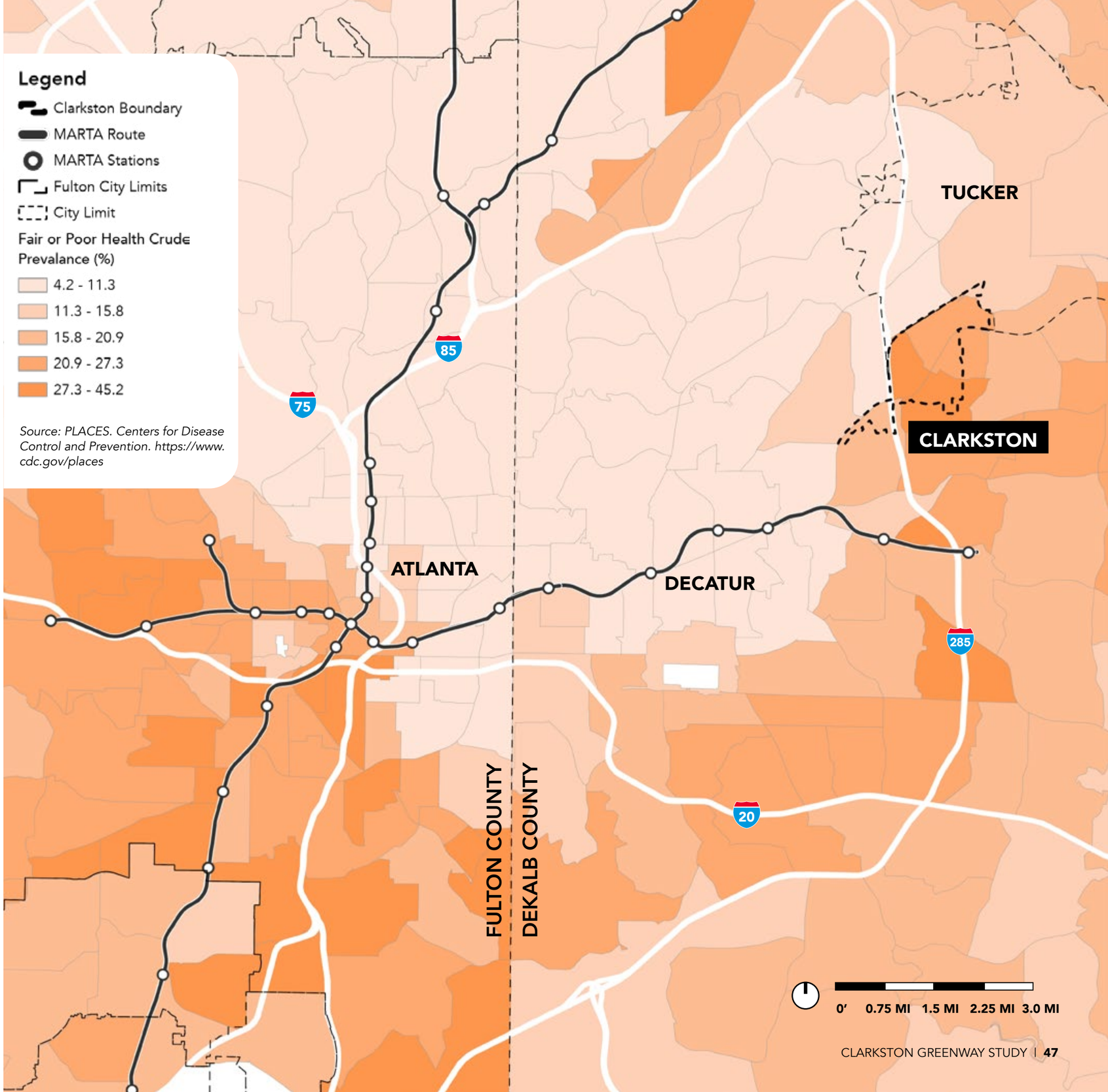
The map to the right is also created from data acquired through PLACES. An indicator of fair or poor health prevalence is measured for residents aged 18 years and above who self-assess their health status. The measure is based on self assessment only and does not include an objective health component. Fair or poor health has been used to correlate health service use, functional status, and mortality.

Clarkston and parts of west Atlanta report a high prevalence of fair or poor health. Poor health is closely tied to median incomes; the same areas that show poor health prevalence also show higher levels of poverty. Health can limit access to economic and educational opportunities. In turn, this impacts communities from earning a higher median income, creating a negative feedback loop that is referred to as the health-poverty trap. There are other factors that contribute to poor health, such as less access to fresh food, a higher number of fast-food restaurants, and a built environment that restricts physical activity, along with fewer parks and open space.[1]

How does this inform greenway design?

Clarkston residents have mentioned health as an important topic within the city, and one that has been highlighted after COVID-19. Residents mentioned the need to access fresh food, public spaces and greenways to augment physical well-being, mental health, and social interaction.

1 "Health, Income, And Poverty: Where We Are And What Could Help," Health Affairs Health Policy Brief, October 4, 2018. DOI: 10.1377/hpb20180817.901935.



PREVIOUS PLAN REVIEW

The City of Clarkston and surrounding municipalities have undertaken many planning efforts in recent years. As shown to the right, Clarkston's planning efforts fit together with the City's Comprehensive Plan as the overall policy guide for the future. All other adopted City plans, like LCIs and small area studies, are amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. Ideally, this study will be adopted by Council and become official City policy. Zoning and other codes help enforce those plans. Plans for Clarkston, Tucker, and DeKalb County were reviewed, with the most relevant ones being:

» Clarkston 2040 Comprehensive Plan

» Clarkston LCI (2015)

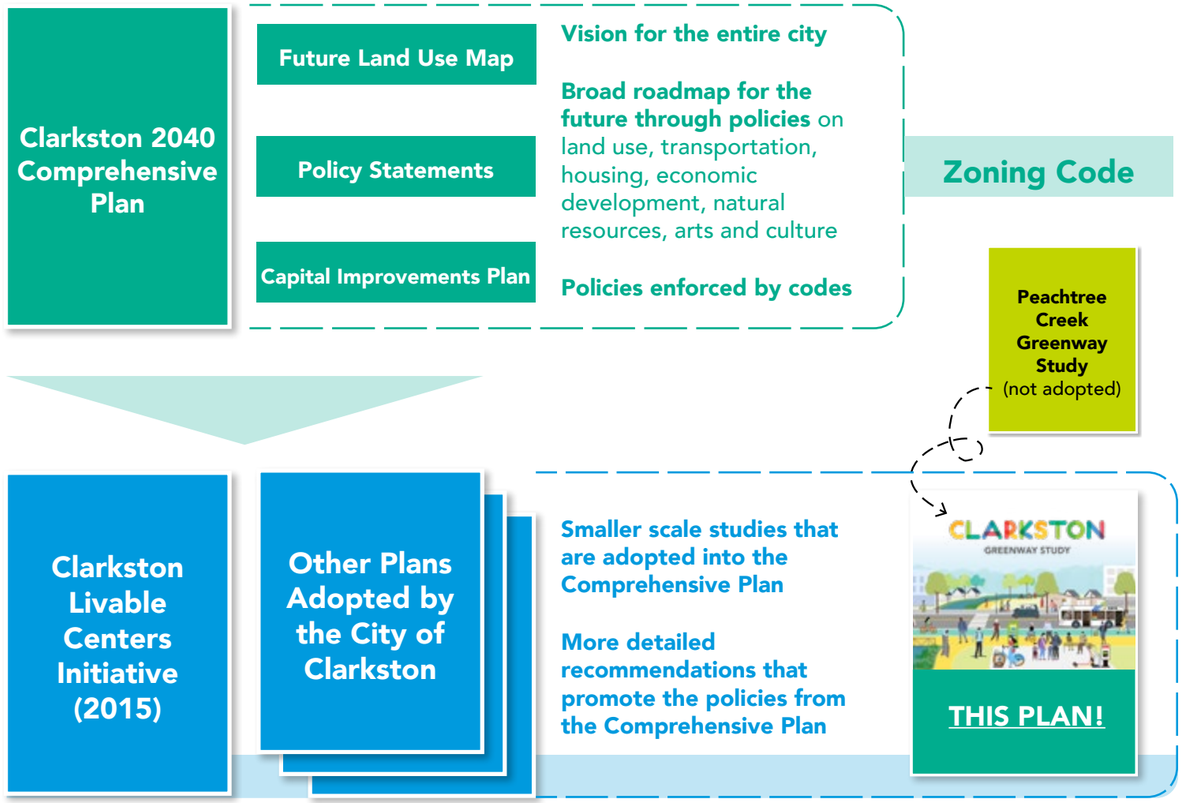
» Peachtree Creek Greenway Parks and Trails Study (not adopted by the City of Clarkston)

» DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Other plans reviewed include various streetscape project designs, the Tucker Comprehensive Plan, Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary Master Plan, Georgia Tech Active Living Walkability Study, Tucker PATH Trail Master Plan, Clarkston Community Active Living Plan, Clarkston Speaks, the Trust for Public Land's 10-minute Walk Study, and the Urban Land Institute's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) report.

The importance of creating pedestrian-friendly streetscapes has been underscored in all of the above efforts. A successful greenway within Clarkston will consider past efforts and engage with the diverse community of the city to understand the needs, challenges, and aspirations of residents.

HOW PLANNING FITS TOGETHER



PREVIOUS PLAN REVIEW

CLARKSTON 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Clarkston 2040 Comprehensive Plan update provides a vision and policy recommendations for the new city limits of Clarkston, while focusing on the revitalization of Downtown. The bullet points below describe existing conditions and relevant proposed transportation projects.

Existing Physical Context

» There is limited walkability outside of downtown's core area due to cul-de-sacs and a lack of gridded streets.

» Sidewalks are inconsistent throughout the city and mostly exist on primary streets like East Ponce de Leon Avenue.

Existing Social Patterns

» Almost a third of residents live below the poverty line, and the majority of households are renters.

» The city has gained multi-family units in recent years, but affordability is still a concern for residents.

Existing Transportation Issues

» There are inconsistent sidewalks and bike lane networks through the city.

» Safety concerns exist, such as inadequate lighting and a lack of pedestrian crossings.

» The transit network is limited to destinations outside of the core downtown area.

Public Feedback: Mobility & Open Space

In public meetings, Clarkston residents identified their walkable neighborhoods and carpooling and biking culture as assets. Nearly 20% of attendees voted for sidewalk improvements and sidewalk plantings. Residents prioritized the conservation of existing open spaces while expressing interest in new parks to create a connected open space system in the city. The South Fork Peachtree Creek was identified as an area for passive recreation through paths and trails. Residents proposed to extend the Stone Mountain Trail to northern and eastern parts of the city, along I-285, the creek, Montreal Road, and Brockett Road.



Above: Map of open space and trails opportunities map from the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Proposed Transportation Policies

» Encourage development within and between local nodes to be more transit-supportive.

» Enhance the existing transit options including a local shuttle service.

» Implement a community shuttle system.

» Create a comprehensive trail system, including a green necklace park system.

» Focus on pedestrian and cyclist safety throughout the city.

» Ensure balance between automobiles and other users.*

» Repair or replace sidewalks.*

» Focus pedestrian and landscape improvements in areas with the high visibility.*

**Also recommended in the 2015 LCI*



Above: Map of the proposed transportation networks from the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

"Develop a robust network or 'green necklace' of parks connected by sidewalks, trails and bike facilities - specifically that follows the South Fork of Peachtree Creek not located in the national wetlands..."

Quote from the recommendations section of the Comprehensive Plan

PREVIOUS PLAN REVIEW

CLARKSTON LCI 2015

The LCI Update established a vision to redevelop downtown and provide services for all users along with creating safe and contextual mixed-use neighborhoods. The study identified five focus sites and projects:

» Downtown Clarkston

» South Fork Village Area

» Stone Mountain Trail Village Area

» Potential Medical and/or Refugee Outreach District

» Comprehensive multi-use trail system and PATH extension

Existing Context

» High pedestrian activity with people walking to transit stops, schools, and retail destinations.

» Bike users consist of both residents and bikers on the Stone Mountain Trail.

» People in older apartment complexes outside the city limits also walk, bike, and take transit into the city, partially due to lower incomes.

» 97% of the 660 employees who work in Clarkston commute into Clarkston from other cities. Only 20 individuals live and work in the city.

» 32% of residents commute elsewhere in DeKalb County and 31% commute to Fulton or Gwinnett Counties.

» 40% of residents own one vehicle, while 6% of residents do not own a vehicle.

Transportation Challenges

» Only two MARTA bus lines run within the city. The bus stops have poor wayfinding and signage.

» Inconsistent sidewalks and uninviting streetscapes are found on most streets.

» Lack of public gathering spaces within the downtown core.

Public Space Policies and Projects

» Promote accessibility to existing and new facilities and spaces.

» Incorporate parks and open spaces into new developments.

» Design and / or create public spaces and pocket parks.

» Update or create parks master plans for Milam Park, Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, and Forty Oaks Nature Preserve.

» Develop a Comprehensive Bicycle Infrastructure Plan.

Focus Projects - South Fork Village

» Redevelop some aging garden apartment communities into a range of housing types.

» A new park is proposed along Peachtree Creek. The park would include a trail that connects to the rest of the city.

Transportation Projects

» Build the South Fork Peachtree Creek multi-use trail.

» Reconfigure N. Indian Creek Drive / Montreal Road.

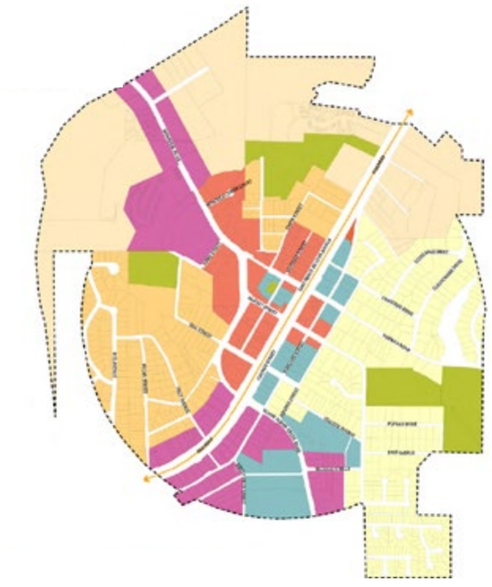
» Build complete streets on Market Street and Hill Street.

» Install traffic signals on Market Street and Wilson Street.

» Add a multi-use trail and sidewalks along Rowland Street.

» Make sidewalk and streetscape improvements.

» Upgrade the railroad crossings at Market Street and Wilson Street.



Above: Map of Clarkston Proposed Future Land Use Plan, in the 2015 LCI Study.



Above: South Fork Village Concept Plan A from the 2015 LCI Study.

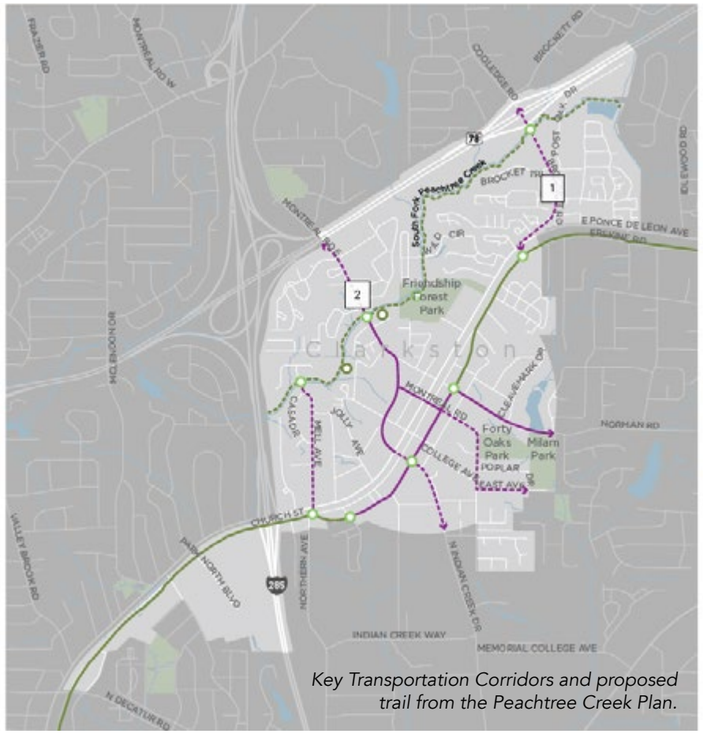


Above: Transit Framework Map from the 2015 LCI Study.

PREVIOUS PLAN REVIEW

PEACHTREE CREEK GREENWAY PARKS AND TRAILS PLAN

Clarkston was selected to work with National Recreation & Park Association, Trust for Public Land, and the Urban Land Institute to create a commitment towards the 10-minute Walk Campaign. 71% of residents in Clarkston live within 10-minute walk to a park. However, existing trails and park facilities are concentrated to the south. The City of Clarkston did not finish or adopt this study, but some key analysis findings are helpful for the potential trail routes in this feasibility study.



Key Transportation Corridors and proposed trail from the Peachtree Creek Plan.

Relevant Findings

- The South Fork Peachtree Creek extends for 2 miles, with sewer easements along the majority of the bank.
- The 100-year floodplain follows the creek.
- There are opportunities to create extended parks along the creek where it intersects with housing developments.
- Building a trail along the creek will require extensive clearing of the understory to make it accessible and improve sight lines for safety.
- The greenway may require five roadway crossings, mostly at-grade.
- The proposed trail width is typically 12 feet, with a minimum 25-foot buffer from the creek.
- The greenway would connect to Montreal Road, N. Indian Creek Drive, and Norman Road.
- New improvements are proposed along Mell Avenue and Brockett Road to create a trail loop.

PREVIOUS PLAN REVIEW

DEKALB COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2022

The DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan identifies priority transportation projects and policy recommendations that are included within the 2050 Unified Plan. The priorities for this plan include providing multimodal transportation options, using transit infrastructure to improve the quality of life, and prioritizing investments to improve equity across the county. In Clarkston, nine projects were identified based on previous studies and community engagement, listed below.

Tier 1 Projects

- N. Indian Creek /Montreal Road diet
- Clarkston greenway
- Improvements at Glendale and Church Street
- Safety improvements at the Mell Avenue multi-leg crossing intersection

Tier 2 Projects

- Multimodal improvements on Jolly Avenue

Tier 3 Projects

- Complete street on Brockett Road
- Multi-use path on N. Indian Creek Drive
- PATH Foundation's proposed Snapfinger Trail
- Intersection improvement at Church Street / Ponce de Leon Avenue at the N. Indian Creek Drive underpass



Right: Map of recommended projects in Clarkston, from the DeKalb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

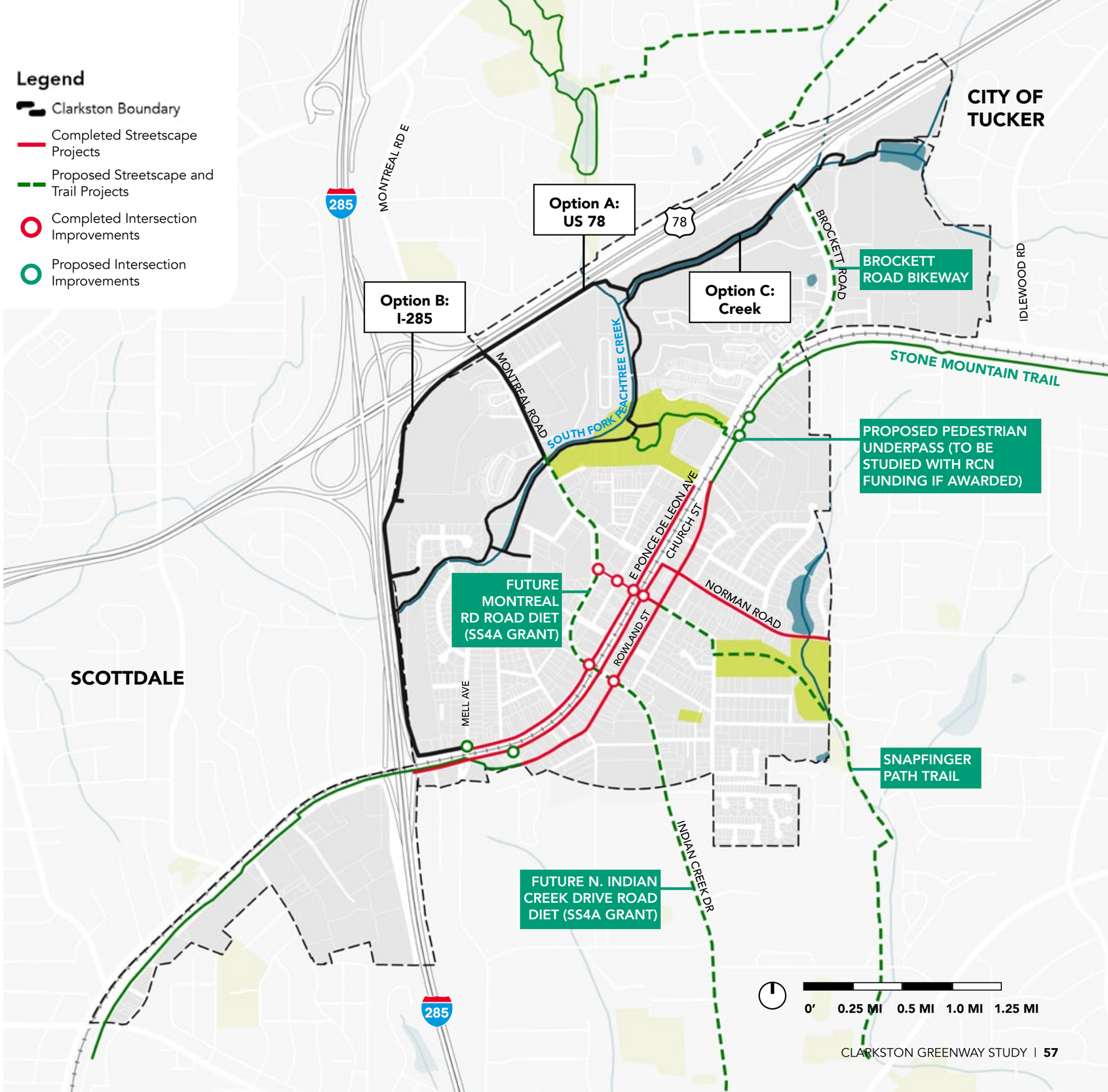
PREVIOUS PLAN REVIEW

COMPLETED & PROPOSED PROJECTS

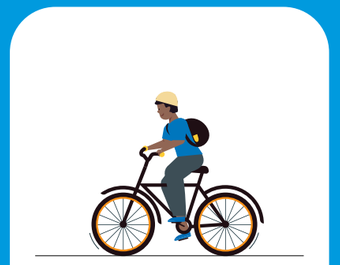
The City has completed key streetscape projects that were recommended in the 2015 LCI Update, the Clarkston 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and the DeKalb Transportation Plan. The list of completed projects includes:

- Rowland Street Pedestrian and Bikeway with road diet and HAWK signal at the intersection with N. Indian Creek Drive.
- East Ponce de Leon Avenue Streetscape Improvements (from I-285 to Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary).
- Church Street Streetscape Improvements (from I-285 to Norman Road).
- Norman Road Streetscape Improvements (from Church Street to Milam Park).
- Market Street Complete Street (from N. Indian Creek Drive to Rowland Street).
- Intersection improvements and signal updates along Market Street and N. Indian Creek Drive.

Projects that are underway include off-road trails along N. Indian Creek Drive and the Snapfinger PATH, the bikeway and complete street project on Brockett Road, a road diet on Montreal Road funded by the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) federal grant, intersection improvements on Mell Avenue and Church Street, and a pedestrian underpass under the CSX railroad tracks (the City will re-apply for a grant through the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program to study this project in Fall 2024). This pedestrian underpass would connect Church Street to East Ponce de Leon Avenue in front of Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary.









CHAPTER 2

Engagement

Public Engagement Approach
Community Engagement Ambassadors
Project Advisory Group
Partnerships & Youth Engagement
Interviews & Focus Groups
Public Input Events
"Walk With Us" Storytelling Video

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Reaching a Diverse Audience

Recognizing the unique demographics of Clarkston, the project team adopted a customized approach to make participation easy, accessible, fun, and meaningful for all community members across cultures, languages, and generations. The team began the engagement process by meeting with trusted community leaders identified by the City to learn how residents have typically participated in planning efforts and to ask for advice on how to make it easy and accessible for everyone to participate. This meeting directly informed the engagement strategy and helped form lasting partnerships with established, trusted community networks. Based on feedback from community leaders, the project team established a group of Community Engagement Ambassadors—active community members representing Clarkston's diversity who were compensated to promote the study through their networks, to translate information and engagement activities into Clarkston's top languages, and to interpret at public events.

Engagement Methods

Many outreach and engagement methods were used throughout the process to ensure broad participation and representation including:

- A graphics-based communication system to illustrate ideas and a glossary of terms;
- Pop-ups at established community events where large audience typically attend;
- Online surveys and project resources and documents on the project website;
- Project Advisory Group meetings; and
- Ambassador training sessions and help with outreach, translation, and interpretation.

Outreach Methods

Engagement events were promoted to the community through the following means:

- Social media posts on City of Clarkston Facebook and Instagram accounts;
- Signage posted at prominent locations throughout Clarkston;
- Distribution of hard copy flyers with placements at the Clarkston Community Center, City Hall, Clarkston Public Library, and business establishments, and distribution to City partners by City staff and elected officials;
- Outreach to community partners and e-flyer distribution through partner networks;
- Email campaigns from both City staff and the project team to a database of key stakeholders, businesses, and residents of Clarkston; and,
- Ambassadors who translated and shared project and meeting flyers in Clarkston's top languages.

















Photo, right: Community members participate in activities at the Refuge Coffee 5K (Source: Olivia Bowdoin, Refuge Coffee, 2023)

Chapter 2 | Engagement

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DRIVES THE PROCESS

MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

Ambassadors

Compensated community members and organization representatives, most of whom speak multiple languages.

Project Advisory Group

A group of volunteer community members who advise on many pieces of the process at key milestones and advocate for the project.

Large Public Events

Existing community events where the project team coordinated with organizations to host a booth or separate pop-up event.

"Walk With Us" Storytelling

On-going opportunity for residents to film, write, photograph, or draw their experiences and how a greenway would benefit them.

- TRANSLATE MEETING NOTICES
- TRANSLATE INPUT ACTIVITIES
- DISTRIBUTE MEETING NOTICES
- INTERPRET AT PUBLIC EVENTS



FEEDBACK ON:

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

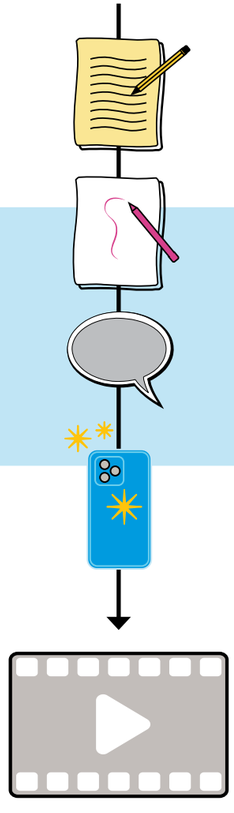
ALL CLARKSTON RESIDENTS



FEEDBACK ON:

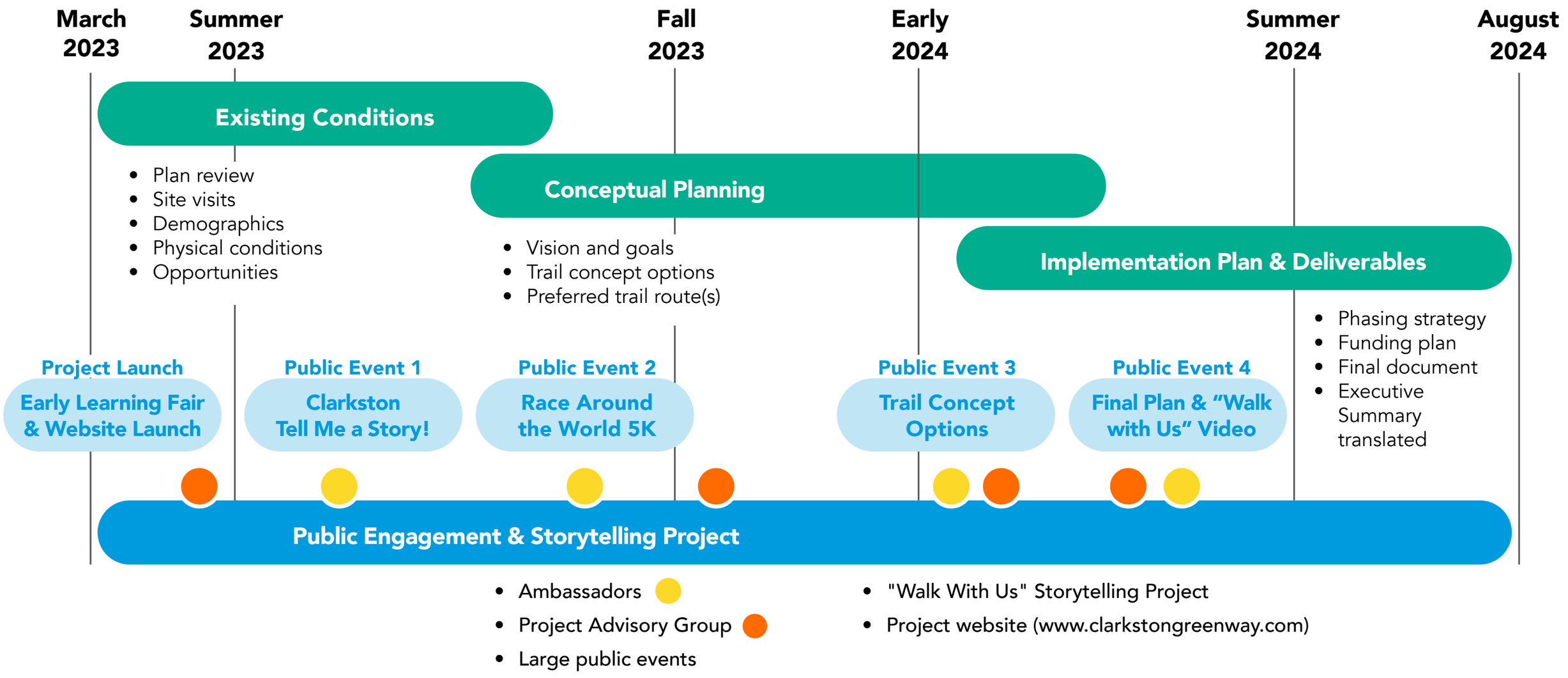
TRAIL ALTERNATIVES & DESIGN

- **Pop-up at Early Learning Fair with CDF Action**
  June 3, 2023
- **Clarkston Tell Me A Story! with CDF Action**
  August 19, 2023
- **Race Around the World 5K with Refuge Coffee**
  September 23, 2023
- **Three Pop-ups Throughout the Community**
  February 24 & 25, 2024
- **Clarkston Juneteenth Festival**
  June 15, 2024



Chapter 2 | Engagement

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DRIVES THE PROCESS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AMBASSADORS

Ambassador Roles

The Community Engagement Ambassador group consisted of active community members able to assist the project team with targeted community outreach as well as translation and interpretation of project materials into Clarkston's most commonly-spoken languages. The project team compensated them for their time and expertise for each task. They helped the project team with many tasks throughout the planning process, including:

» Feedback on input activities and how best to translate materials;

» Increasing awareness of and knowledge about the greenway project with their networks;

» Encouraging residents to provide input on potential greenway trail options;

» Offering opportunities for residents to engage each other and the project team about the study; and,

» Ensuring regular, ongoing communication with residents throughout the project duration.

Ambassador Tasks

The main tasks were translating and distributing meeting notices, translating input materials the project team used at public events, and interpreting questions and content at public input events.

Training Session | July 13, 2023, at Clarkston Womans Club

The Ambassador training session took place on July 13, 2023, at Clarkston Womans Club during a working lunch session. This session covered the project purpose and schedule, roles and responsibilities for the Ambassadors, and engagement activities for the first public meeting. The Ambassadors offered helpful feedback about all of the above, summarized below:

» Check if public meetings fall on or during religious holidays since that might limit the number of attendees.

» Use short videos in various languages that can be shared on WhatsApp to catch the attention of the community.

» Engage local businesses and English as a Second Language (ESL) centers.

» Consider the use of digital tools, like surveys, to expand outreach and enable translations into various languages.

» Include written translations and interpreters at public meetings.

» Prioritize some languages over others for translations, but it would help to have interpreters that speak multiple.

» Engage high school and college students in translation and interpretation.

» Use symbols and graphics instead of words when possible.



MAJOR AMBASSADOR TASKS

1 TRANSLATING FLYERS / INVITATIONS

2 DISTRIBUTING FLYERS / INVITATIONS

3 TRANSLATING INPUT MATERIALS / ACTIVITIES

4 INTERPRETING QUESTIONS & CONTENT

PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

Project Advisory Group

The Project Advisory Group (PAG) was a group of volunteers engaged in the Clarkston community representing residents, business owners, educators, community organization leaders, City staff, and more. The PAG met four times during the planning process at key project milestones to provide the project team with guidance on input methods and greenway design alternatives. They were also tasked with distributing meeting notices and encouraging friends and neighbors to attend public events.

PAG Meeting #1 | June 29, 2023, at Clarkston Womans Club

The first PAG Meeting occurred on June 29, 2023, at Clarkston Womans Club during a working lunch session. This session covered the project purpose and schedule, PAG roles and responsibilities, the existing conditions analysis to-date, and public outreach and engagement ideas.

PAG Meeting #2 | October 19, 2023, Walking Audit on Montreal Road

The walking audit occurred in the afternoon of Thursday, October 19, 2023, with a few members of the PAG and multiple project team members. The walking route started at Clarkston Village Shopping Center and went north on Montreal Road to the bridge at Highway 78. The group stopped at three places along the way to discuss the following:

- The trail route next to South Fork Peachtree Creek and alternative trail routes depending on site conditions.
- Street crossing options like HAWK and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) signals to enhance pedestrian safety when crossing Montreal Road.
- Challenges associated with placing a trail next to Highway 78 or I-285.

PAG Meeting #3 | February 1, 2024, at Clarkston Womans Club

The third PAG Meeting was a working lunch at the Clarkston Womans Club. The session covered the project goals and evaluation matrix, which were defined by all the previous public engagement events. The PAG provided insights for the evaluation metrics and on the preliminary trail route. While some segments were initially removed due to site conditions, members suggested a re-evaluation because those segments reached more residents. The project team conducted subsequent site visits and found that the segments were feasible to build.

PAG Meeting #4 | May 9, 2024, at Clarkston Womans Club

The fourth PAG Meeting was also a working lunch at the Clarkston Womans Club. The session covered the proposed greenway route as refined from February's public engagement and construction phasing for implementation. The PAG also provided feedback on how to engage the public at the upcoming Juneteenth event.

What we heard at the walking audit:

- Noise from the highways is a major detractor for building a trail next to Highway 78 or I-285, and those routes feel disconnected from places people need to go.
- Residents need trails for different reasons. Some would like purely recreational trails, and others may want the most direct route to daily needs, like a grocery store.



Photo: Members of the PAG went on a walking audit and stopped to talk about the option near the creek and Montreal Road.

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The project team hosted virtual (in-person interviews were offered) stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions to hear unique perspectives on the lived experience of traveling to, through, and around Clarkston. The purpose of these conversations was to hear from residents and potential future greenway trail users about the community's transportation issues and opportunities, and to learn which values to prioritize in the planning process. The feedback helps ensure that the study reflects a wide and representative variety of wants, needs, and desires.

Schedule and Format

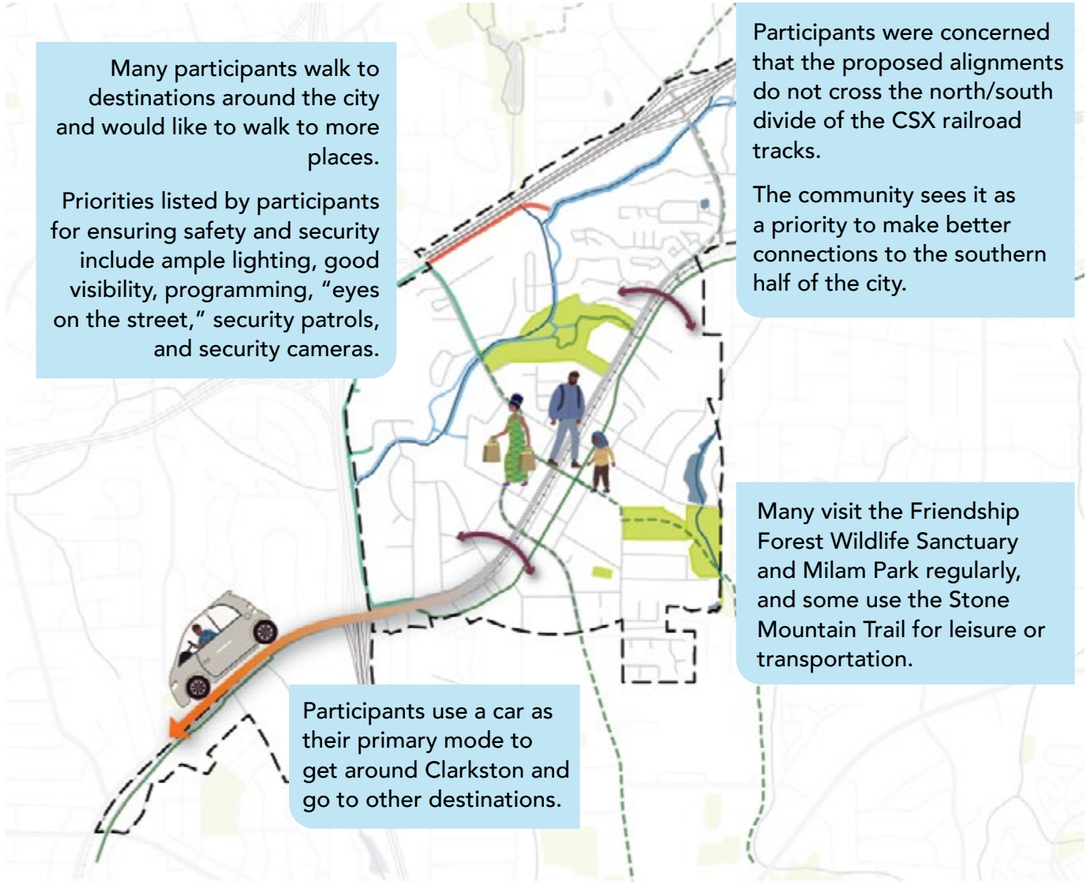
- City of Clarkston staff and elected officials: July 27 to August 23, 2023, when available.
- Youth and young adults #1: August 2, 2023
- Long-term residents: August 2, 2023
- Youth and young adults #2: August 2, 2023

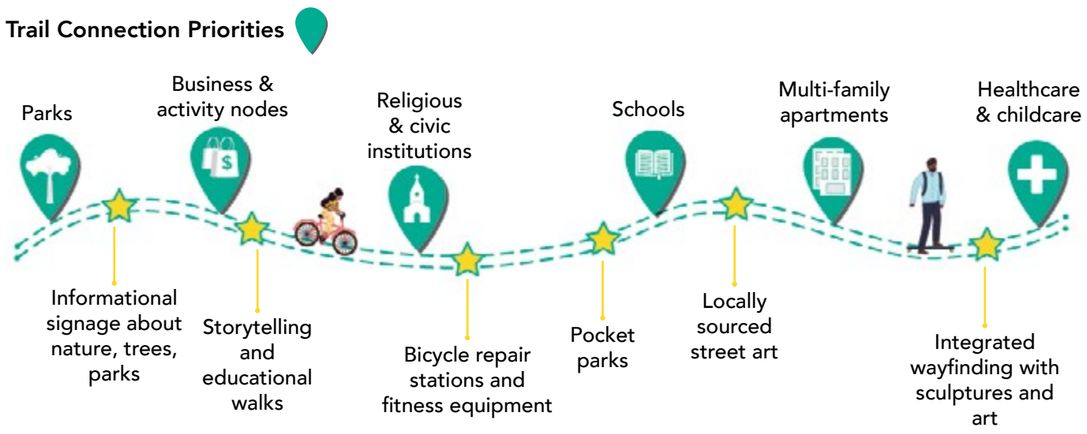
Interviews and focus group discussions were organized around a list of questions focusing on personal travel and experience in Clarkston; priorities for planning trails pertaining to connectivity, equity, nature, health, and parks; and any foreseeable challenges to planning, building, and activating trails in Clarkston. Interviewees indicated that they would use a future greenway and generally expressed support for the study and for more active connectivity throughout Clarkston.

Key Takeaways

Participants emphasized the transportation aspect of new trails and the importance of connecting people to parks, schools, services, and other destinations more easily without a car. However, a concern was raised that several alignments were already identified, and that proposed alignments do not cross the railroad tracks to serve destinations in the southern half of the city, where many of these destinations are. Participants acknowledged the importance of access to nature, and shared a strong support for integration of nature and educational campaigns on the natural environment. Participants also stressed the importance of public art, education, and storytelling and expressed the desire for Clarkston's rich history, diversity, and unique identity to be celebrated wherever possible.

Some participants acknowledged that Clarkston families face equity challenges, including lack of access to motor vehicles for many, and support enhanced sidewalks and trails as a way to address inequity. However, the possibility of new trails contributing to gentrification and displacement was not seen to be a major concern by most participants. Security was identified as a key concern; it is important for all of the community, especially girls and young women, to feel safe and comfortable using new greenways. Priorities listed for ensuring safety and security include ample lighting, good visibility, programming, "eyes on the street," safety in numbers, security patrols, and security cameras.





PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Partnership with Georgia State University Master of Public Health Students

The project partnered with Georgia State University (GSU) through the efforts of Dr. Ashli Owen-Smith, Associate Professor and MPH Program Director in the School of Public Health. From January to April 2024, two GSU students, Nadia Smith and Susan Hong, assisted the project team with public health analysis, community outreach, and youth engagement. The partnership enhanced the project because it brought expertise to the public health analysis—an important topic for the Clarkston community—and provided opportunities to strengthen youth engagement and participation in the process. Ms. Smith and Ms. Hong offered insights on how trails minimize exposure to air pollutants as well as the national standards that are used to evaluate environmental health in communities.

Youth Engagement

To ensure that youth engagement and insights were a part of the project, the project team, along with Ms. Smith and Ms. Hong, met with multiple organizations and schools.

A focus group was held with the Leaders of Tomorrow at the Clarkston Community Center on March 13th, 2024. Leaders of Tomorrow is a program that focuses on creating youth leaders in refugee, immigrant, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Participants were 17-20 years old and shared insights on successful trail design. Some participants in Leaders of Tomorrow also agreed to participate in the project's storytelling video and were interviewed about what they love about Clarkston.

The project team also presented to elementary school students within and outside of Clarkston. The first engagement was with Grade 5 students in the Atlanta International School in the Buckhead area of Atlanta. The afternoon included a presentation about sustainable cities, the benefits of trails, and the importance of inclusive community engagement. Students enthusiastically shared their trail experiences and asked questions on how sustainability can be embedded into city planning. The second engagement was a presentation and activity with the Bright Futures after-school program. Finally, the project team also met with a youth soccer team in Clarkston after one of their weekday practices to hear about how they spend time outdoors and to explain the greenway project.





Above: The Leaders of Tomorrow Youth group (Source: Nadia Smith).

Right: The Bright Futures After-School Program.

Community presentations and engagement:

- Atlanta International School
- Bright Futures after-school program
- Clarkston Community Center Leaders of Tomorrow youth group
- Clarkston youth soccer team

What we learned at these events:

- Kids would like to see information boards about the natural features along the trail.
- Trail aesthetics are a priority for kids, along with placemaking elements like food stands.





CLARKSTON TELL ME A STORY!

First Public Event

The project team hosted a booth at the Clarkston Tell Me a Story! event on Saturday, August 19, 2023, from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM, held at the DeKalb County Conference Center at Georgia Piedmont Technical College. Multiple Ambassadors were present to help interpret materials into Arabic, Amharic, French, and Swahili. All materials were translated into the above languages and Spanish, Burmese, Nepali, and English. Feedback activities included:

» **Journey mapping**, which asked how Clarkston residents travel today, how they would prefer to travel in the future, and what prevents them from using that mode of transportation today. This activity also asked what they would like to see on the way.

» **Story mapping**, which allowed participants to put stickers on a map about places they love, where they live and work, places that should be preserved, safety concerns, and the best places for parks and trails. Participants could also leave additional comments.

» **Goal setting**, which asked participants to rank the most important overall goal, then dive deeper and vote on sub-goals for each.

» **The "Walk with Us" storytelling initiative**, which asked participants to write or draw their experiences or to be filmed telling their stories about Clarkston and answering questions about greenways.

All these activities were available digitally on the project website from August 18 to September 29, 2023. They were also repeated at the Refuge Coffee Race Around the World 5K and fun run. The summary of all the combined results can be found on page 78.

Photo, left: Results for reasons people do not walk in Clarkston.

Photo, right: A family participates in the drawing exercise for the storytelling initiative.



What we learned at this event:

» Translations and interpreters are needed for Somali, Dari, and Pashto.

» People would love to walk, but many barriers are in the way, like sidewalk conditions, lighting, and distances between destinations.

REFUGE COFFEE RACE AROUND THE WORLD 5K & FUN RUN

Second Public Event

On a beautiful Saturday morning, the project team hosted a booth at the Refuge Coffee Race Around the World 5K event on Saturday, September 23, 2023, from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM, held at Refuge Coffee in Clarkston. The energy from the crowd at the 5K race was palpable and many attendees enthusiastically provided their input on the activities available and gave additional insight through one-on-one conversations with the project team. The input activities at this event were the same as those at the first public event, but additional translations were provided for Dari, Pashto, and Somali. Ambassadors were present to interpret materials in Arabic, Somali, Swahili, Amharic, and Burmese as needed. Participants also had the opportunity to join the "Walk with Us" storytelling initiative. A summary of input received from the first two public events can be found on page 78.

What we learned at this event:

- Many residents walk or carpool to their destinations now and would like to continue walking or ride a bike or train.
- Residents want safe walking, biking, and wheelchair access for everyone.
- Access to nature and a focus on health are prevalent priorities.







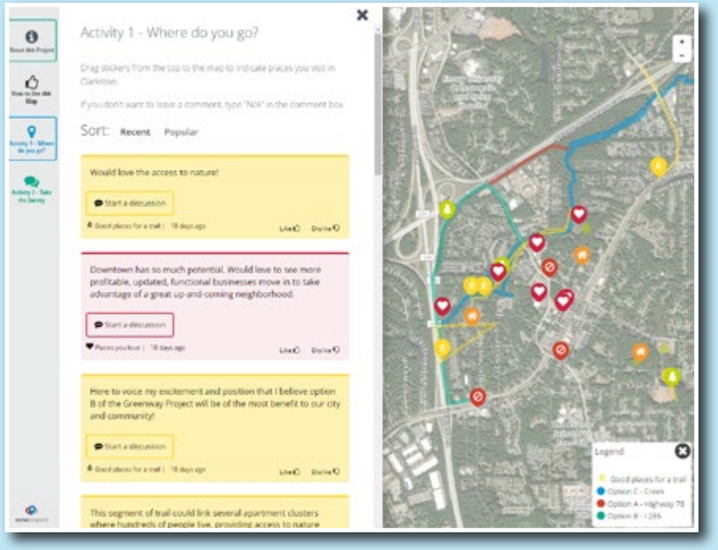
Bottom: Participants vote at the Refuge Coffee Race Around the World 5K (Source: Olivia Bowdoin, Refuge Coffee, 2023).

RESULTS OF FIRST ROUND OF ENGAGEMENT

All engagement activities from the first and second public events were duplicated and hosted online for more than a month to ensure maximum participation. The combined and summarized results from the two public events and online activities are on the following pages.

Story Mapping

One activity offered the opportunity to place stickers (or drag place markers on the online map) and comments on a map of Clarkston about places that are loved, safety concerns, great places for a park, the best locations for trails, and where respondents live and work. As shown in the images to the right, many respondents love the existing parks, feel unsafe walking on Indian Creek Drive, and think the best place for a trail is following the South Fork Peachtree Creek (Option C).



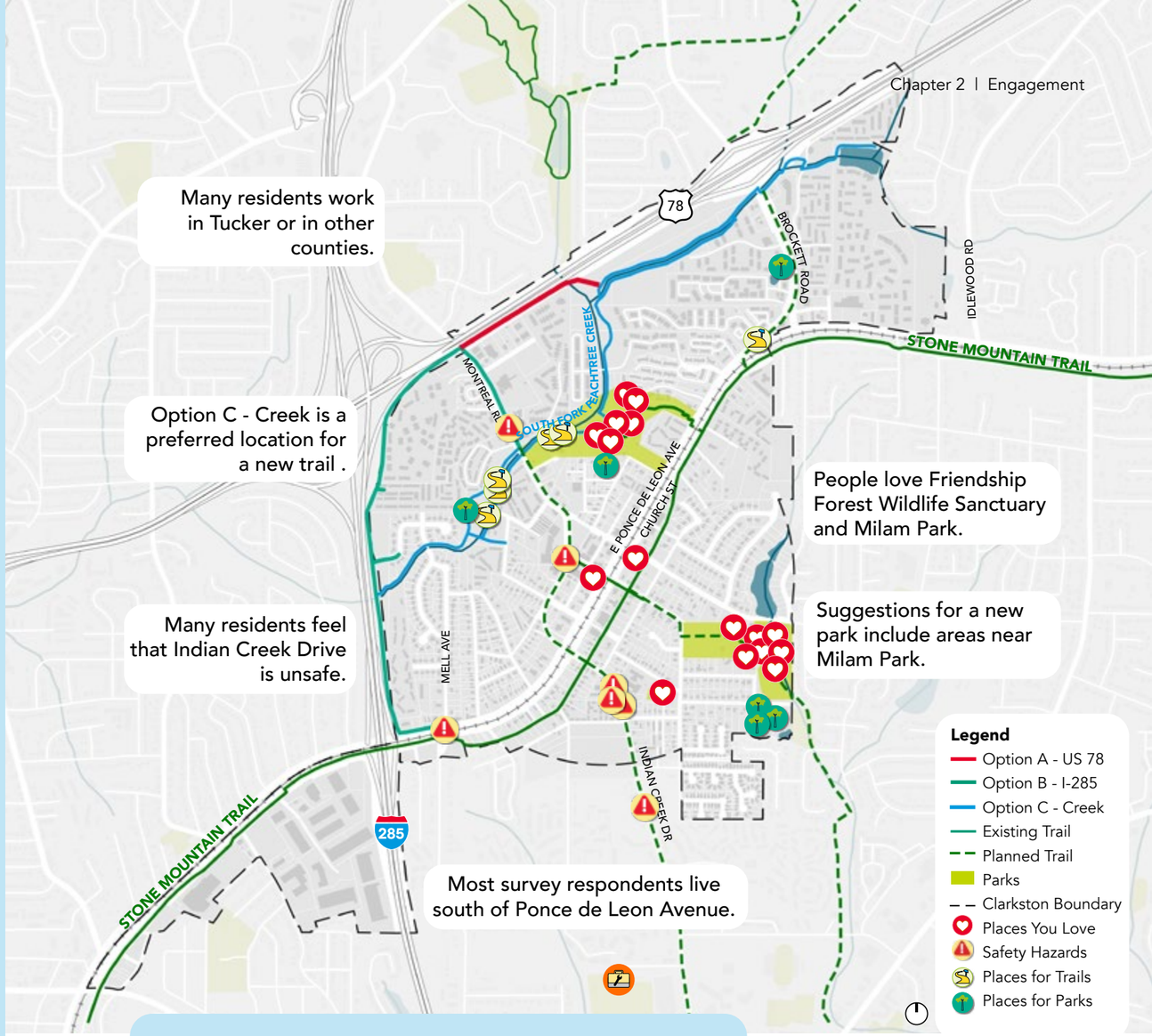
Above: The interactive online map with comments and responses.

"Biking to the park feels scarier than other places because of traffic and no specific crossings. There is nothing to stop cars."

- Youth respondent

"We would like to see some buffer between trail and roads if they are alongside roads [...] Shade is important especially for high risk groups."

- Online participant



"Friendship Forest [Wildlife Sanctuary] is an excellent public space. Placing a cycling / pedestrian path through would enable easier access and a peaceful commute for residents cycling to work or errands."

"Option C could link several apartment clusters where hundreds of people live, providing access to nature within minutes."

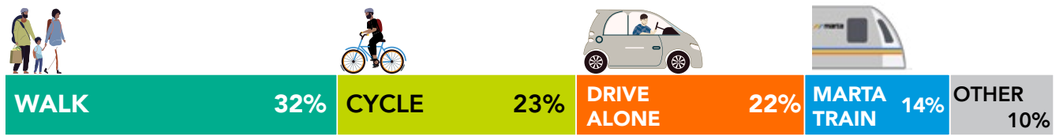
Journey Mapping

Understanding mobility patterns and challenges while moving around Clarkston

How do you currently commute?



How would you like to commute in the future?



Biggest challenges faced while using these modes

WALK
- Safety
- No or bad sidewalks
- Too far away

CYCLE
- Safety
- Too few connections

MARTA
- Too far away
- Too few connections

"I love having a grocery store nearby but the shopping center is very car oriented and walking there is not very pleasant."

"I currently extend my bike commute by a couple miles to avoid Brockett's dangerous traffic and take Idlewood instead. Option C [...] would create a safer and faster route for Clarkston bike commuters working in the Tucker area, or vice versa."

Goal Setting

Understanding greenway priorities for residents.

MOST VOTES BY GOAL CATEGORY

Nature & the Environment
- Tree Preservation
- Access to Nature / South Fork Peachtree Creek
- Air Quality

Physical & Mental Health
- **Trails that allow for built-in physical activity** — Most votes received!
- Access to healthy food
- Programming for community groups

Parks & Green Spaces
- **Public art by local artists** — Most votes received!
- Small parks along the trail
- Connecting existing parks, community centers

Trails & Greenway Design
- **Nature trails** — Most votes received!
- Urban trails
- Lighting and safety/security measures

Affordability & Equity
- **Ensure residents can afford to live in Clarkston** — Most votes received!
- **Build trails that reach people without cars** — Most votes received!
- Build trails that reach lowest income populations

Connecting Places
- Connections to major streets
- Connections to retail, school, church
- Connections to apartment complexes

Note: The goal priorities and their detailed objectives are arranged in descending order of most number of votes. However, there were minor differences between the votes for the goals.

POP-UPS AROUND CLARKSTON

1 **Refuge Coffee Small Business Pop-up**
February 24

2 **Burmese Chin National Day Celebration**
February 24

3 **International Bible Church**
February 25



Third Public Event

The project team used the time between October 2023 and February 2024 to summarize all public comments received and evaluate the feasibility of the trail options. More information about the trail evaluations and the preliminary route can be found in Chapter 3.

For the third public event, the project team hosted multiple pop-up booths around Clarkston to hear from different community groups. On Saturday, February 24, 2024, the team set up a booth at the Refuge Coffee Small Business Saturdays pop-up event between 10:00 AM and 11:30 AM. From there, the team moved to the Burmese Chin National Day Celebration from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM. On Sunday, February 25, 2024, the team was present outside the Clarkston International Bible Church between 12:30 PM and 2:30 PM to talk with people as they arrived for or left church service. Ambassadors were present on both days to help interpret materials into Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, French, Somali, and Swahili. All materials were translated into the above languages and Spanish, Dari, Pashto, Nepali, and English. Feedback activities included the following:

» **Evaluation Matrix**, which showed the methodology and metrics used by the team to evaluate the trail segments based on the project goals and community priorities established in the first round of engagement.

» **Trail Scoring and Preliminary Route Map**, which showed how a particular segment had scored on a scale of "Very Low" to "Very High" and a map of the preliminary Clarkston Greenway route. Participants could vote on the route using stickers, and they could add comments about the route.

» **Trail Segment Preliminary Design**, where participants were shown the existing conditions of the trail segment and a future visualization of the greenway trail. The engagement board also showed examples of the types of trails—nature trail, trail along a highway, trail along the street—from the greater Atlanta region. Participants were asked to place stickers on the trail segments they preferred and add detailed comments as desired. They could also add stickers for desired park locations near the trail and throughout the city.

All these activities were available digitally on the project website from February 25 to March 18, 2024. Information about the website activities was circulated via the project newsletter and the City of Clarkston social media. Additionally, the project team conducted a focus group with the Leaders of Tomorrow youth group at the Clarkston Community Center to explain the project goals, the preliminary route, and to encourage them to take the online survey. The summary of all the combined results can be found on page 86.

"Promote community gardening in apartment complexes."

— Comment received on a sticky note



Bottom, right: Engagement activities at the pop-up at the Clarkston International Bible Church.

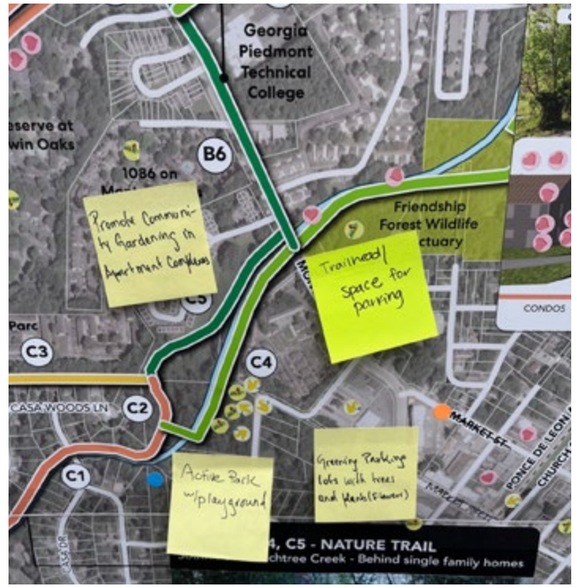
POP-UPS AROUND CLARKSTON

As noted previously, the third public engagement activity began at Refuge Coffee's Small Business Saturday. Clarkston residents stopped by in the morning to interact with vendors and offer feedback on the preliminary route. In the afternoon, the team shifted to the Burmese Chin National Day Celebration, where the Chin community had gathered for an afternoon of music, dance, and food. Participants shared their insights by talking to the Ambassadors, who helped interpret feedback. The next day, the team was present at the Clarkston International Bible Church in the morning. Participants enthusiastically engaged with the project team, placed stickers, shared feedback on the activities, and used the QR code to access the online activities. Many members of the church suggested the 3673 Hill Street location, a shaded lot across from the church, for a new park in the city.

What we learned at these events:

- Residents prefer trails that are not along the highways.
- Residents emphasized greenway connectivity to the apartment complexes.
- Playgrounds for kids and programming opportunities are a priority.









RESULTS OF SECOND ROUND OF ENGAGEMENT

All the activities at the pop-up public events were also duplicated and hosted online for nearly a month to ensure maximum participation. The combined and summarized results from the pop-ups and online activities are on the following pages.

Survey

The main intent of the online activities was to understand the preference between various trail alternatives. A short survey, along with visualizations, prompted users to indicate their preferred segment alternatives and to share their thoughts on the preliminary trail route. Another activity displayed the preliminary route and examples of the trail design on a map; users could also add comments and drag place markers to indicate locations for new parks. The survey was shared at the pop-up events, through newsletters, and on social media, garnering many responses.

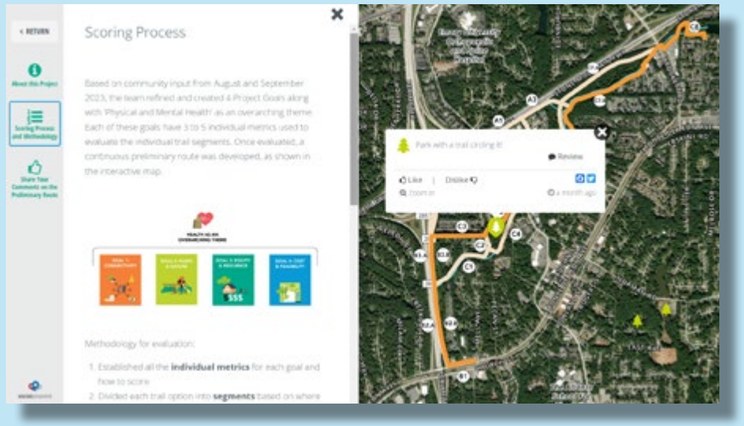


Photo: Interactive online map with comments and responses

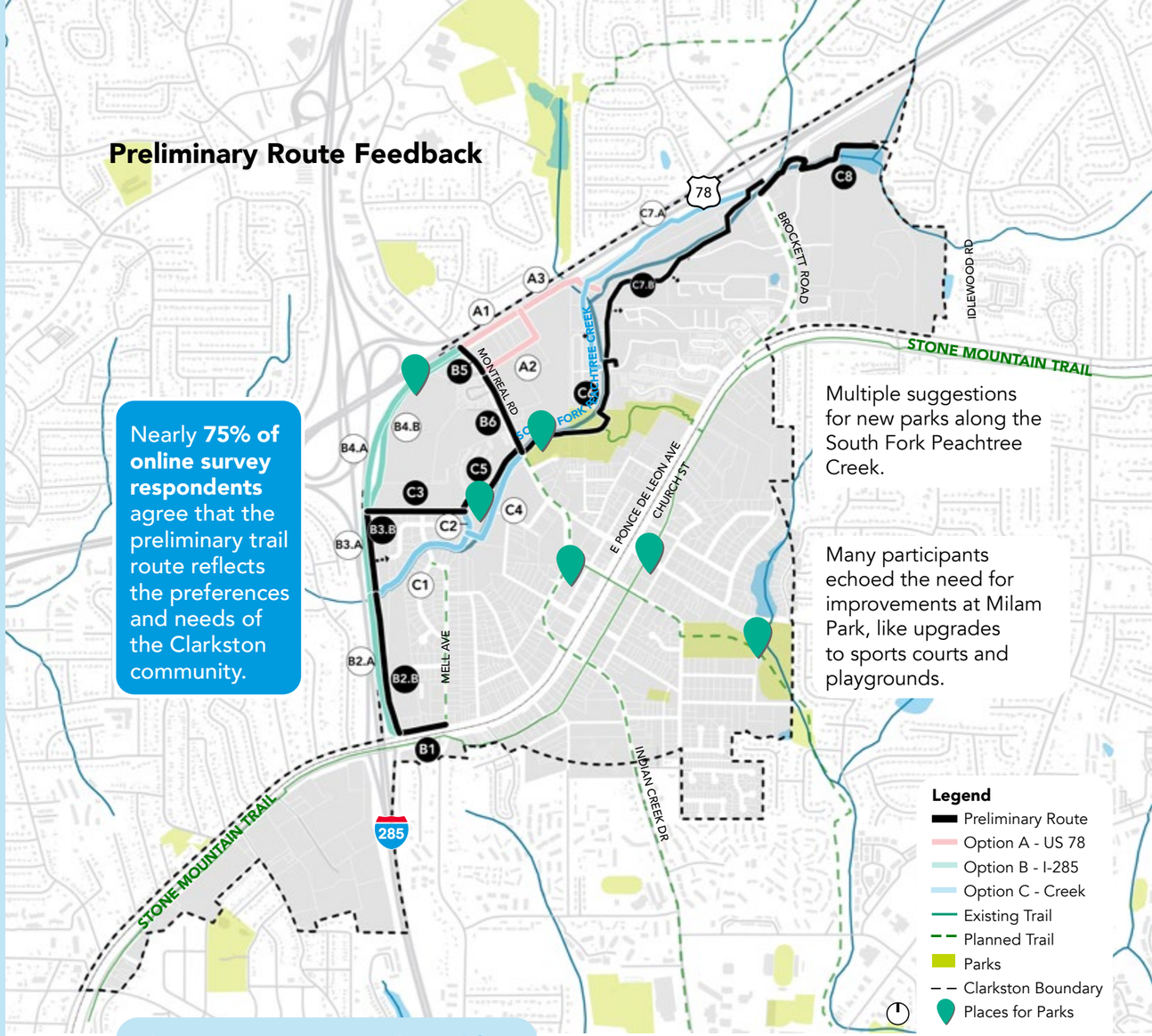
"A pedestrian bridge over Stone Mountain Freeway (78) would provide connectivity w/ Tucker parks."

- Online comment

"Why is there no connection to the town center? Cut over to W. Hill or Sams and connect to the Thriftown shopping center, or all the way up Hill and down Vaughan to Market."

- Online comment

Preliminary Route Feedback



Nearly **75% of online survey respondents** agree that the preliminary trail route reflects the preferences and needs of the Clarkston community.

Multiple suggestions for new parks along the South Fork Peachtree Creek.

Many participants echoed the need for improvements at Milam Park, like upgrades to sports courts and playgrounds.

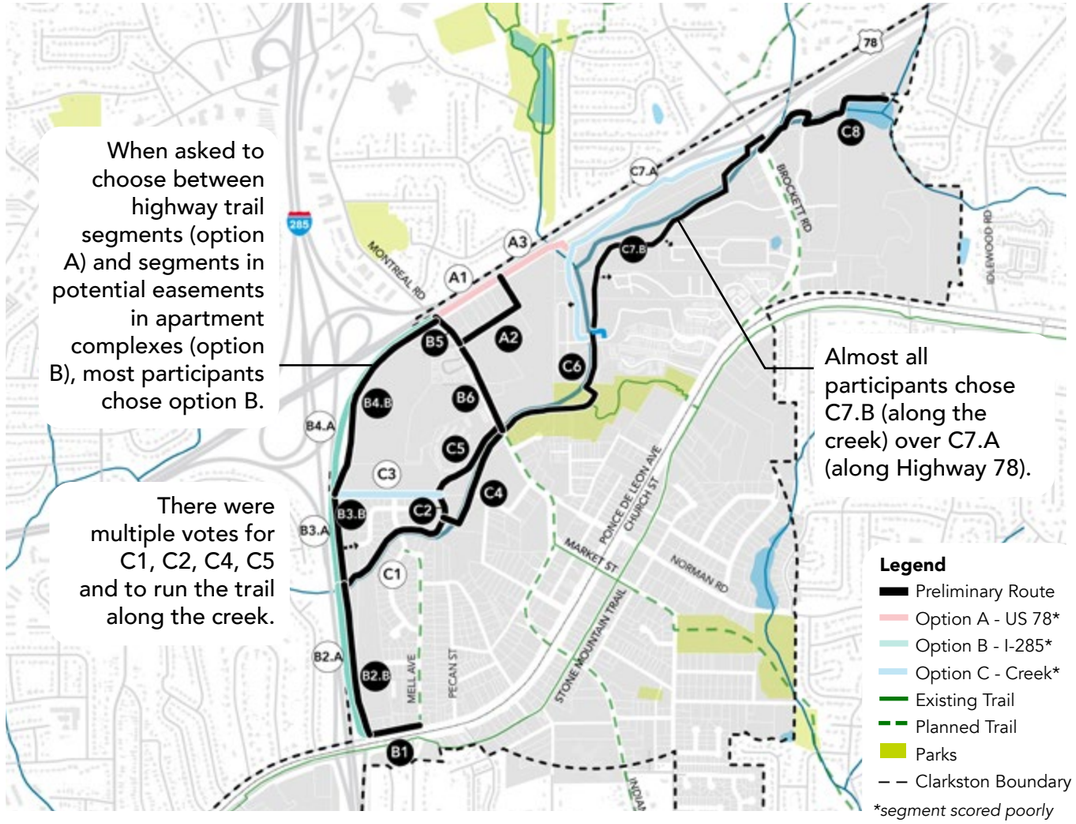
"The easier it is to access the trail from the locations of people's homes, the more likely the trail will get frequent use for daily activity (errands, shopping, exercise, etc.), not just excursions."



"We should do both C5 and C4 creating a park in between that will connect multiple neighborhoods [...] This is one of the largest undeveloped plots of land in Clarkston and since we are already planning on doing water mitigation, now is the time to develop it. This park would be as big as Milam and add a public space to this side of Clarkston that has no other parks."

Trail Segment Preference

Understanding greenway priorities for residents.



"Creating the trail in the easement of apartments allows easier access for those living there as well as creating less isolation on the trail in general, reducing crime potential."



"The creek has always divided Clarkston and we have the opportunity to convert it to a something that connects Clarkston."

Comments and Recurring Themes

Understanding greenway priorities for residents.



Creek Preference

The opportunity for a trail alongside the South Fork Peachtree Creek garnered a lot of interest; the community was excited about the experience of walking within trees and nature. Participants called attention to the need for safety and security through lighting and other devices.



Apartment Connectivity

Almost all residents spoke about the importance of connecting the creek to residents living in apartments through trail spurs. The feedback echoed the need for a greenway trail that caters to daily activities—transit, groceries, exercise—alongside recreation.



Highway Noise and Pollution

Trail segments along the highway received lower votes, with respondents sharing their concern about noise pollution, air quality, heat, and traffic on the highway. People also commented that the highway trails are less likely to be used because they do not connect to where people live.



Programming Ideas

Participants emphasized the need for placemaking and community activities along the trail to make it appealing to all users. Suggestions include pocket parks, playgrounds, community gardening, food vendors, and areas for rest along the trail.

RESULTS OF THE FINAL ROUND OF ENGAGEMENT

Juneteenth Festival: Final Public Event

The final public event was held at the Clarkston Juneteenth Festival, on Saturday, June 15th, 2024, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. On Saturday, the team set up a booth near Refuge Coffee, among other vendors on Market Street. Again, all the materials on the feedback boards were translated into multiple languages and Ambassadors were also present to assist residents with interpretation. The activities focused on the:

» **Proposed Trail Route**, which showed the proposed trail route running through Clarkston, along the South Fork Peachtree Creek and connecting to apartment complexes.

» **Phasing Plan**, which showed how the project will be phased into three primary phases, followed by future expansions and additional trail routes. The phasing details included the trail segment, length, appropriate cost (including surveying, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction), and how the trail will help connect residents to landmarks and amenities.

» **Placemaking and Trail Furniture**, to show how the trail will include benches, streetlights, and other trail furniture along the route. Residents were asked to share the names of organizations who could serve as potential partners for community gardens, public art, and placemaking.

The team also set up a TV monitor with speakers to show the final "Walk With Us" video. All activities and the video were duplicated on the project website and the survey was open for a month to encourage feedback. Although there was lower participation in the final public event than in previous events, all participants (both in-person and online) were excited to see the proposed trail route reflecting their feedback from the previous insights, and connecting to where they need to go in Clarkston.

"I love this combination of nature trails and better connectivity to businesses and the post office and Friendship Forest [Wildlife Sanctuary]."







Top, left: An activity board near Refuge Coffee showing the proposed trail route and renderings of the trail.

Top, right: Community Engagement Ambassador, Eyelachew Desta, explaining the project to residents.

Bottom, left: Clarkston residents with project team member, Jonathan McCaig.

"WALK WITH US" STORYTELLING VIDEO

The "Walk With Us" storytelling initiative was created to address the need to capture the diverse insights in Clarkston in a variety of methods, so residents could choose to engage in ways comfortable to them.

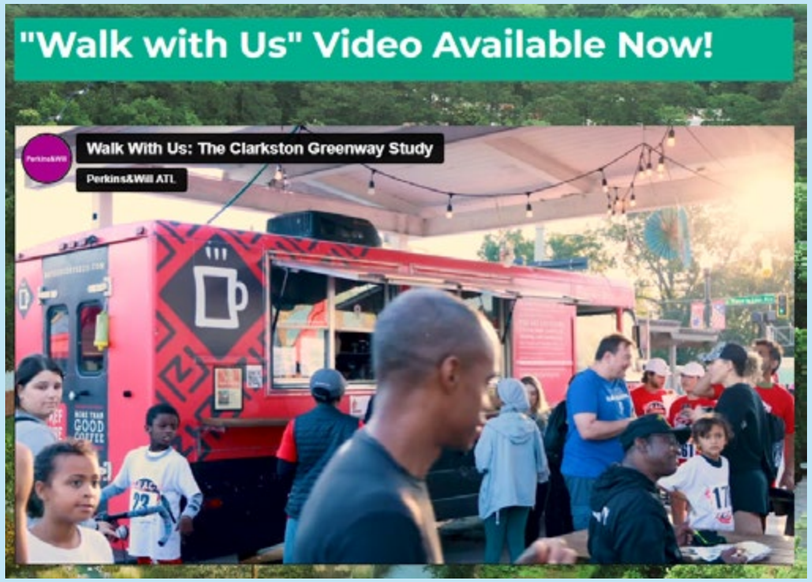
At the start of the project, community leaders emphasized the power of short videos that could be circulated on WhatsApp groups. The video storytelling began with a project introduction video and interview with Mayor Burks to offer people an alternative way to learn about and engage with the content. Throughout the project, the team captured footage of the public events and conducted video interviews with community members in different languages. Many residents volunteered to share their thoughts on video, including teenagers from the Leaders of Tomorrow program and long-time resident.

Short 30-second video clips featuring the Project Advisory Group members and the Ambassadors were released on the website to show residents what their neighbors thought of the project. At the final public event in June, the full video was presented to residents, portraying the unique planning process, the rich insights, the enthusiasm for the trail, and the community's commitment to making Clarkston a better place for long-time residents and newcomers.

The "Walk With Us" video was not only a way to document the Clarkston Greenway Study process but also a resource that the City of Clarkston can use while pursuing grants for the project. Additionally, the video has been shared with community organizations and project partners and could serve as a resource for and community engagement.

30-second videos from Ambassadors and Project Advisory Group members





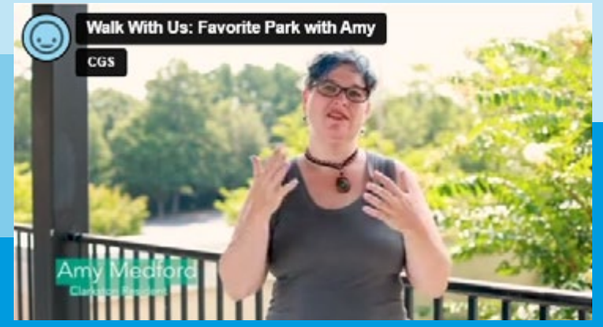
Right: The "Walk With Us" video as shown on the project website.

Middle, right: Mayor Burks in the Project Introduction Video.

Bottom: 30-second video clips from members of the community.













CHAPTER 3

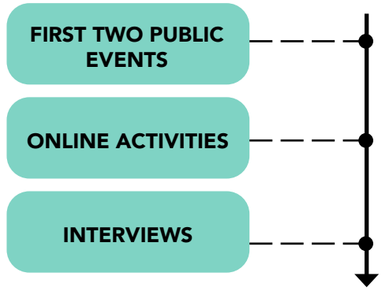
Feasibility Study

Evaluation Approach
Trail Segments
Evaluation Matrix and Mapping
Trail Types
Scores for Trail Feasibility

EVALUATION APPROACH

1. Community Goal Setting

Community feedback provided an understanding of residents' priorities.



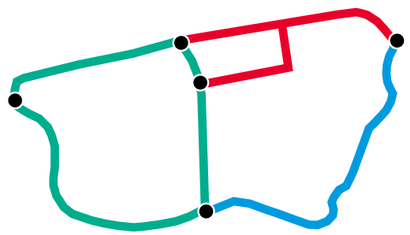
2. Establish Goals & Metrics

Create goal categories with health as an overarching theme throughout all goals.



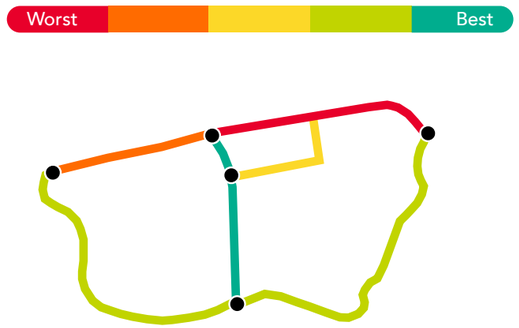
3. Determine Trail Segments

Divide each trail option (Options A, B, and C) into segments based on where they intersect streets or each other. Determine if alternatives were possible for some of the segments.



4. Score Each Segment

Use a scale of 0 (worst) to 5 (best) to score each metric for each trail segment and sum the total for each segment. GIS analysis and site walks provided the basis for the scores.



5. Develop Preliminary Route

Develop the preliminary route based off the highest scores to create a fully connected trail route, linking people and key destinations.



6. Re-score Using Feedback

Re-score each segment using public feedback and additional site walks.



7. Determine Final Route

The project goals were informed by the feedback from the first round of public engagement that uncovered resident priorities. The team used the priorities to create an evaluation matrix to comprehensively assess the proposed trail segments. The matrix was based on cost and feasibility, connectivity, human experience, the intensity of required stakeholder coordination, and public support. A more detailed matrix with metric descriptions is found on page 100. The evaluation matrix has four categories, developed through community priorities: connectivity; parks and nature; equity and resilience; and, cost and feasibility.

Because health was identified as an important topic, physical and mental health was established as an overarching theme, and all categories include metrics addressing health. Within each category, there are 3 sub-categories based on the different features of trails. Each sub-category has metrics that were scored on a scale of 0 (worst) to 5 (best), with interim scores of 1, 2, 3, or 4. The metrics were developed with ambitious, yet feasible, standards to ensure that the greenway meets best practices within the region. Each metric was also adapted to Clarkston's urban context—most residents live in apartment complexes, a large proportion of residents do not have access to cars, the South Fork Peachtree Creek restricts access between neighborhoods, and most businesses are located along key streets.

The team conducted Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis using data from Google Earth, DeKalb County, and U.S. Census Bureau, to score each segment. The construction feasibility of each trail segment was determined through multiple site walks conducted from December 2023 to April 2024. Members of the project team and a city representative assessed the natural and physical conditions and identified additional opportunities to connect to existing streets. This resulted in a more accurate route for each trail segment shown in Chapter 4.

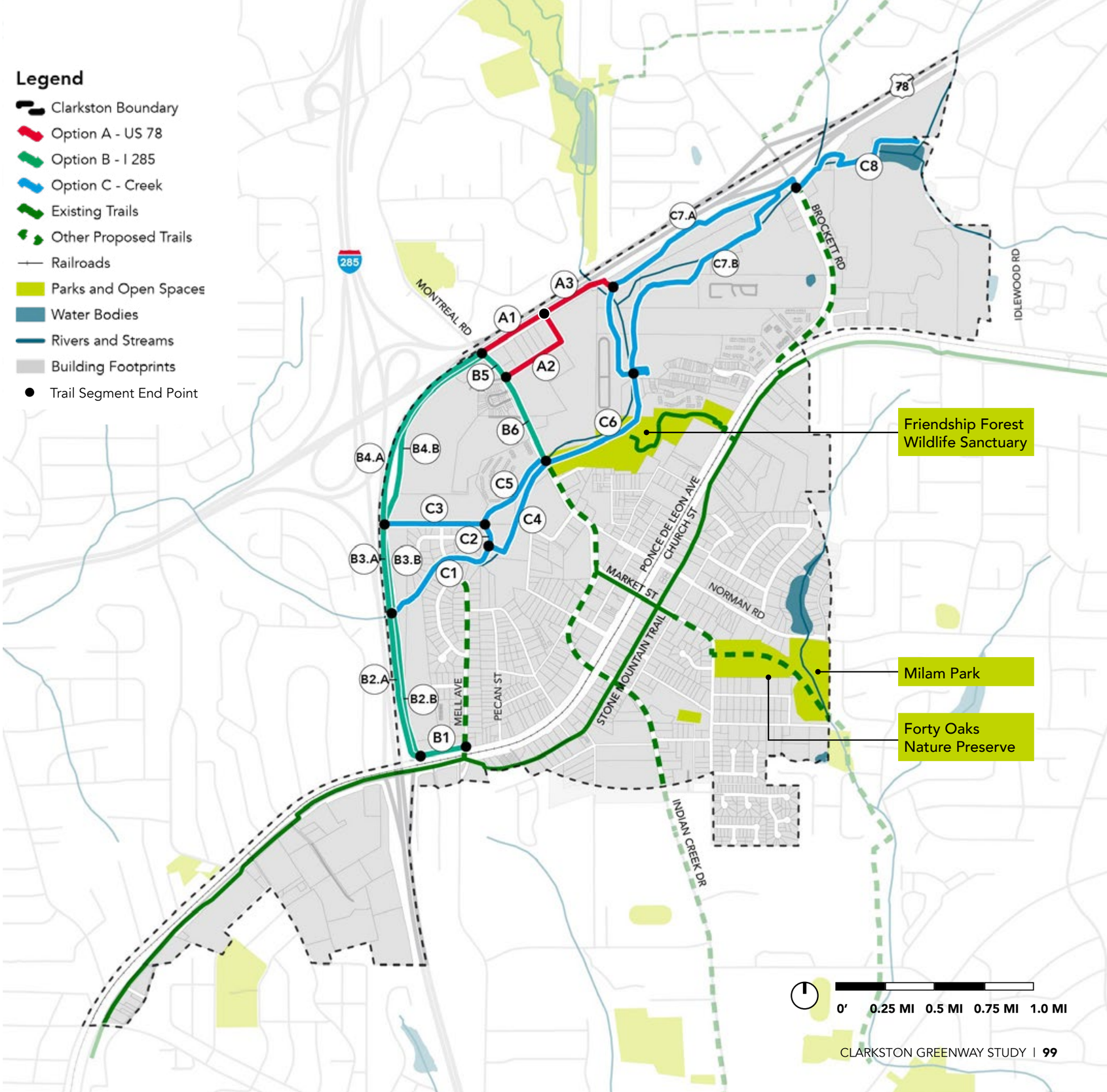
TRAIL SEGMENTS

To accurately evaluate the greenway trail options, the trail routes were split into segments because conditions along each route change significantly from one side of the city to another. The trail segments were split at points where a trail intersected with another trail or a major street. The map to the right shows how Option A was split into 3 segments, Option B was split into 6 segments, and Option C was split into 8 segments. Based on site conditions, some segments presented the opportunity for alternate routes. Segments B2, B3, B4, and C7 have alternatives where "A" refers to a route along I-285 or Highway 78, and "B" refers to a route along potential easements in apartment complexes or along the South Fork Peachtree Creek.

A1 Highway 78: Montreal Road to potential parking lot easement
A2 Clarkston Industrial Blvd. and potential parking lot easement
A3 Highway 78: Potential parking lot easement to Creek

B1 On Ponce de Leon Avenue at Mell Avenue to I-285
B2.A I-285 - Ponce de Leon Avenue to Creek (Highway grade)
B2.B I-285 - Ponce de Leon Avenue to Creek (Potential easement)
B3.A I-285 - Creek to Marquis Apartments (Highway grade)
B3.B I-285 - Creek to Marquis Apartments (Potential easement)
B4.A I-285 - Marquis Apartments to Montreal Road (Highway grade)
B4.B I-285 - Marquis Apartments to Montreal Road (Potential easement)
B5 On Montreal Road at Highway 78 to Clarkston Industrial Blvd.
B6 On Montreal Road at Clarkston Industrial Boulevard to South Fork Peachtree Creek

C1 Along Creek behind single-family homes
C2 Bridge along Creek behind apartment complexes
C3 Connection from I-285, through potential apartment easement
C4 Along Creek - west of Montreal Road, on southern side
C5 Along Creek - west of Montreal Road, on northern side
C6 Along Creek - from Montreal Road through Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary
C7.A Along Highway 78 to Brockett Road
C7.B Creek - along existing sewer easement to Brockett Road
C8 Brockett Road to man-made lake behind Silver Oaks apartments



Chapter 3 | Feasibility Study

MATRIX TO EVALUATE THE TRAIL SEGMENTS

Each of these goals have 4 to 8 individual metrics scored on a scale of 0 (worst) to 5 (best).



Physical and Mental Health was established as an overarching theme for all goals.

GOAL #1: CONNECTIVITY

Active Commute	
1.1	Trail segment connects to major streets with wide sidewalks and traffic calming elements within 1/4 mile
1.2	Trail segment connects a residential area to retail, restaurants, or employment opportunity areas
1.3	Trail segment connects a residential area to community resources (e.g. park, school, church, community center, natural area, etc.)
Regional Connectivity	
1.4	Trail connects residential areas to transit (MARTA bus stops)
1.5	Trail connects to existing trail(s) / bike paths and planned trail / bike path networks in Clarkston and adjoining jurisdictions
Pedestrian Safety	
1.6	Trail segment minimizes conflicts with crossing traffic
1.7	Trail segment provides sufficient separation from roads with high design speeds
1.8	Trail connects to hospitals, health clinics, and other locations with health services

GOAL #2: PARKS & NATURE

Access to Parks and Natural Resources	
2.1	Trail segment provides access to existing and proposed parks
2.2	Trail segment connects to South Fork Peachtree Creek
2.3	Trail segment has opportunities for small, pocket parks along the route
Comfort and Safety	
2.4	Trail segment is socially safe
Experience	
2.5	Trail segment minimizes traffic nuisance
2.6	Trail segment minimizes effects from weather conditions
2.7	Trail segment does not require major tree canopy removal
2.8	Trail segment reaches residents with high rates of obesity and mental health distress

GOAL #3: EQUITY & RESILIENCE

Affordability	
3.1	Trail segment reaches residents without access to cars and who earn lower incomes
3.2	Trail segment is not located near properties that are susceptible to change
Health	
3.3	Trail segment helps provide access to healthy food
Environment	
3.4	Trail segment minimizes flooding

GOAL #4: COST & FEASIBILITY

Property Owner Coordination	
4.1	Trail segment limits the need for right-of-way acquisition or easements
4.2	Trail segment reduces the need for coordination with property owners
4.3	Trail segment limits the need for additional trail spurs to connect to destinations or residential areas
Cost and Funding	
4.4	Trail segment leverages programmed (funded) construction projects
4.5	Trail construction costs (including acquisition if necessary)
4.6	Trail maintenance costs and staff resources
Community Preference	
4.7	Trail segment received community support

ACCESS TO TRANSIT & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

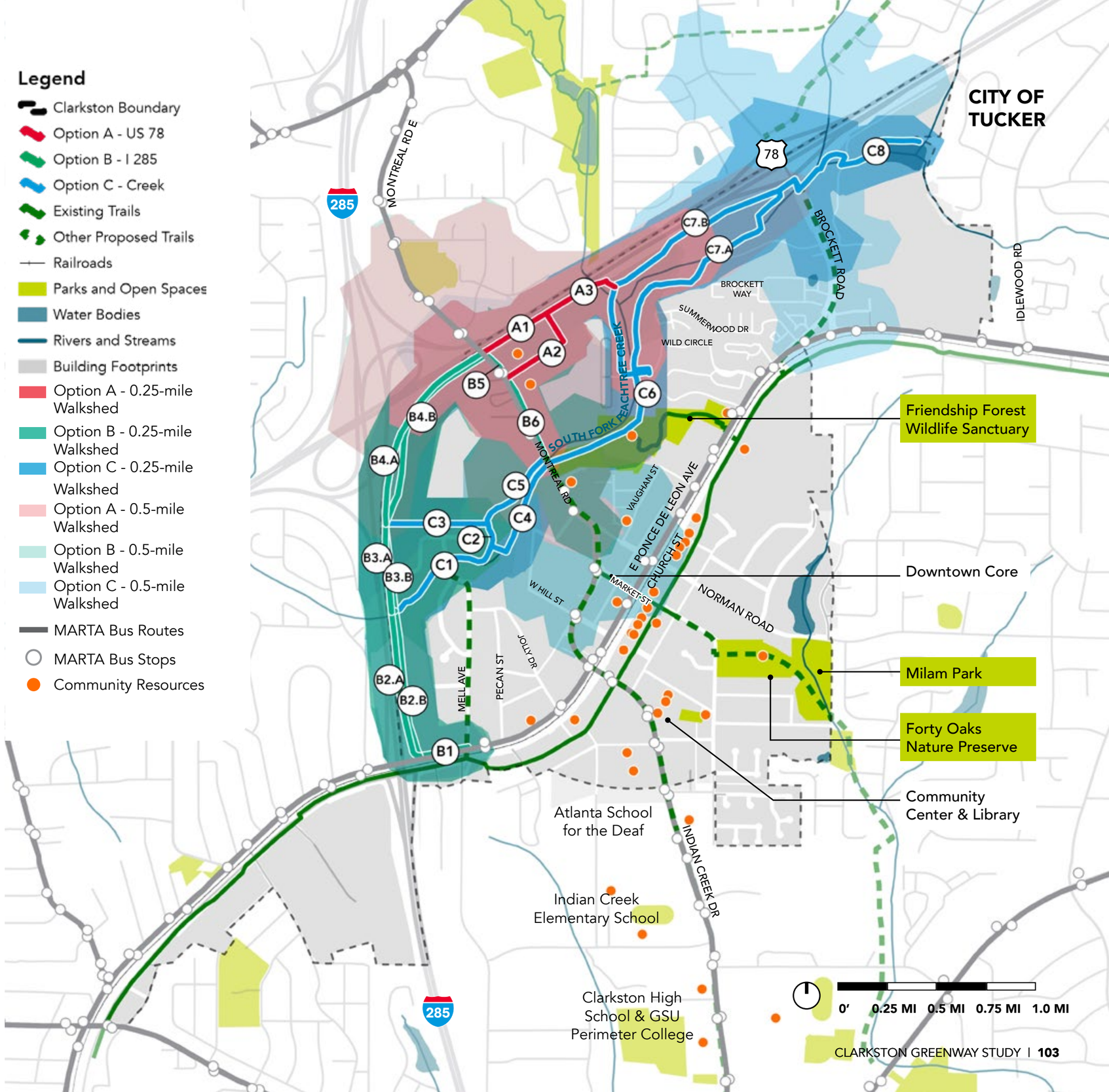
A walkability analysis was conducted to understand how the proposed trail segments connect to public transit stops, existing trails, retail or employment areas, community resources, and other important areas in the city. The map to the right shows the area that a person could reach if they walked 0.25 mile (5 minutes) and 0.5 mile (10 minutes) from the trail segment along existing streets and future trail segments.

» Trail segments that connect to Montreal Road and Brockett Road (B5, B6 C4, C5, C7.A, C8) not only provide access to MARTA stops, the town center, and institutions, but also to places beyond Clarkston, like Scottdale and Tucker.

» Trail segments along the South Fork Peachtree Creek can serve a larger population if the trail connects to apartment complexes. Since most residents in Clarkston live in large apartment complexes, connectivity should be a priority.

» Trails along I-285 (B2.A, B2.B, B3.A, B3.B, B4.A, B3.B) have limited connectivity because the highway is a barrier. For a successful trail network, these segments should connect to existing streets like Casa Drive and Casa Woods Lane. The trail should also connect to Montreal Road and Ponce de Leon Avenue so that users can access public transportation.

The walkability analysis was used to score trail segments in the Connectivity category of the Evaluation Matrix, specifically metrics 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 on the previous page.



ACCESS TO RETAIL & HEALTH LOCATIONS

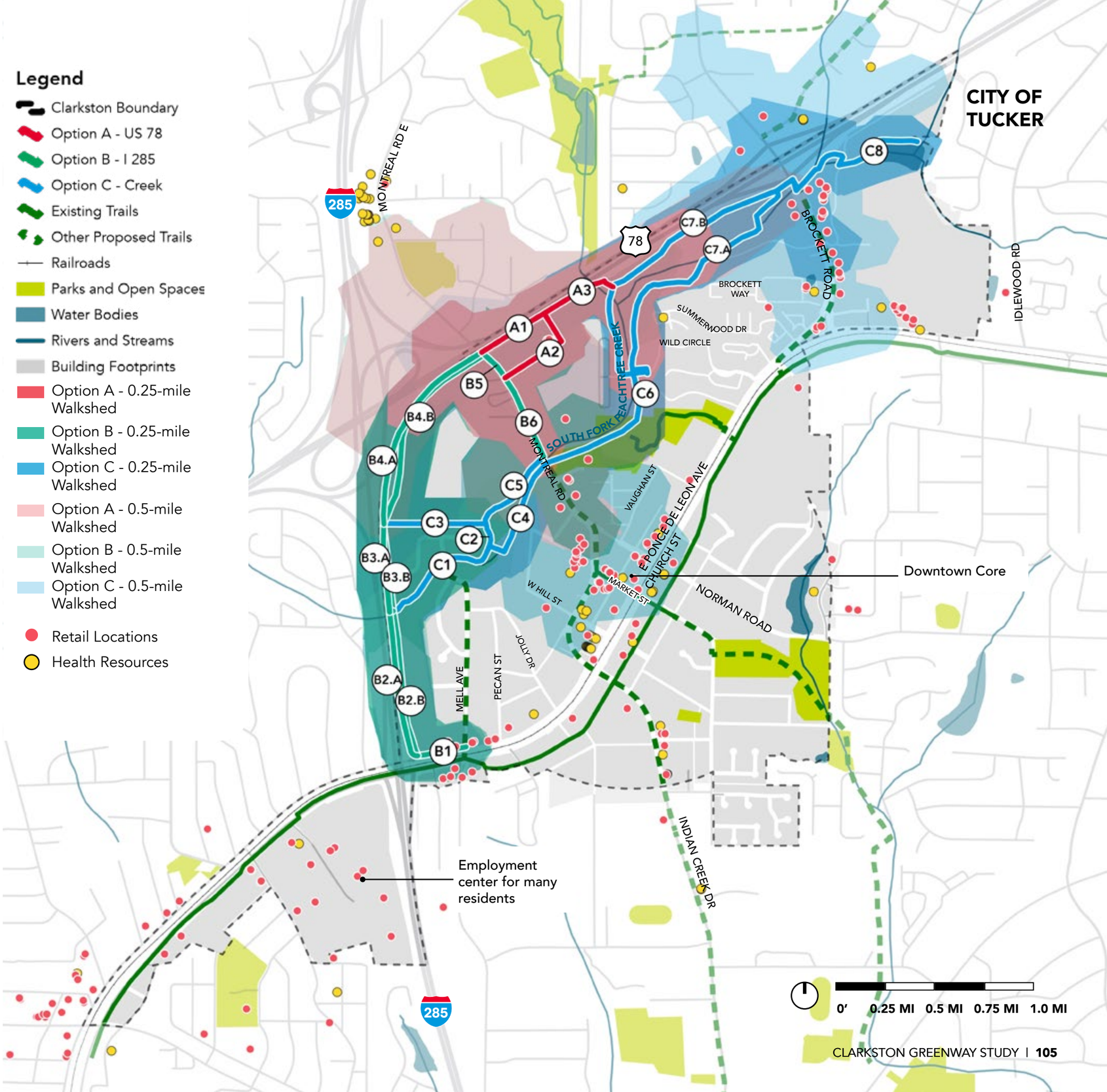
The the red circles on the map to the right show retail locations, such as grocery stores, supermarkets, restaurants, department stores, and general retail. The health locations in yellow show clinics, pharmacies, drugstores, and related health services. The data was obtained from Google API and cross-verified through Google Maps.

Most retail establishments are clustered in locations around Clarkston, either in the downtown core, Clarkston Village Shopping Center, or in the shopping centers on Brockett Road. Beyond Clarkston, retail can be found along Montreal Road in Tucker or Church Street in Scottdale.

How does this inform greenway design?

Residents in Clarkston have expressed the need for a trail to connect to everyday activities, such as grocery shopping. Trail segments that connect to Montreal Road or Brockett Road can enable easier access to these locations. Clarkston also has a high percentage of physical inactivity and mental health distress. Trails can provide easy, walkable access to health services and also help residents access outdoor spaces.

It is also important that the greenway trail provides connectivity beyond Clarkston, by connecting to MARTA bus stops, the Stone Mountain Trail, or to other planned trail projects in Tucker and unincorporated DeKalb County. The walkability analysis was used to score trail segments in the Connectivity category of the Evaluation Matrix, specifically metrics 1.2 and 1.8.



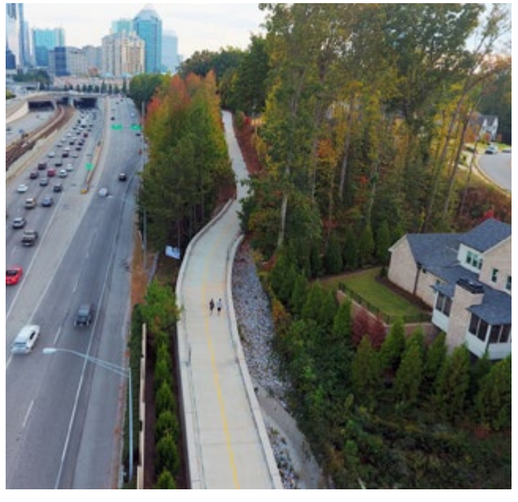
TRAIL TYPES

Urban Trail Along a Highway

Highway trails use the existing right-of-way and underutilized land along a freeway or highway corridor to create a multi-use trail that can be accessed by pedestrians and bicyclists. PATH400 in Atlanta runs along the Georgia 400 corridor, reconnecting communities that have been divided by the highway. It helps people commute to and within Buckhead without driving a vehicle. The trail is 5.2 miles long and connects to three MARTA stations: Lindbergh Center station, Lenox station, and Buckhead station, and there are plans to connect it through the city of Sandy Springs.

Trails Through Potential Apartment Easements

Trails adjacent to or through apartments complexes have become a common way to connect people in developed urban areas to community amenities, retail, employment, and recreation areas. The Atlanta BeltLine has many apartments along it, and trail spurs connect residents directly from apartment drives to other areas in the city. Trails located in easements in apartment properties provide an amenity to residents, sometimes require less negotiation with property owners, and benefit more people.





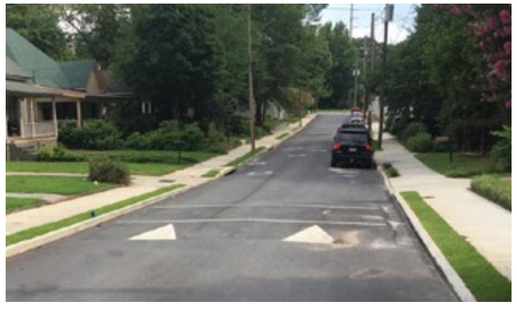
Above, left: Photo of the PATH400 trail running along GA 400, towards Buckhead (Source: PATH Foundation).

Above, right: The Peachtree Creek Greenway in Brookhaven runs along apartments, with a protective fence and gated access (Source: Jonathan McCaig).

Side Path Trail and Shared Streets

Trails along existing streets are designed by extending sidewalks and adding elements like landscape buffers, furniture zones, trees, and street lights. Side path trails are cost-effective and easier to implement because they run along existing road infrastructure. However, they may require ground utilities, bus stops, and signals to be shifted. An example of a side path trail is the Decatur PATH that runs along Commerce Drive, connecting bicyclists to Downtown Decatur. Shared streets utilize the existing pavement and create a comfortable experience for pedestrians and cyclists alongside motor vehicles. Speed limits are lower on these streets and are enforced through traffic calming devices like tabletop crossings, speed humps, and paving material changes.





Nature Trail Along Creek

A nature trail is a trail that is located in a natural area, along a creek, or through a wildlife sanctuary. In urban areas, these trails are still reasonably accessible to populated places and can be used for recreational or commuting purposes such as walking, bicycling, or fitness activities. Nature trails provide many health benefits— they provide space for physical activity in a natural environment, which can improve both physical and mental health. Increased tree canopy along trails filter out air pollutants, decreasing respiratory illnesses experienced by urban residents.[1] They also increase awareness about resources like air, water, wildlife, and vegetation by connecting communities to nature.

For nature trails to be successful, they must have multiple access points from key locations within the city. This will ensure that people can use the trail for short commutes or longer walks, and that users are not isolated in case of emergencies. Nature trails are common in the greater Atlanta region, such as the South Peachtree Creek trail in Decatur and the PATH400 trail segments that run along the Peachtree Creek.

Nature trails often require boardwalks (long linear decks) where the terrain is difficult to navigate or bridges to cross creeks. Boardwalks are also used to minimize impact on sensitive habitats and to prevent the trail from flooding by placing it above the creek's flood elevation.

1 *Institute for Transportation Research and Education. Evaluating the Economic, Physical Health, and Environmental Impacts of Completing Six Key Segments of the Carolina Thread Trail. Raleigh, North Carolina: ITRE, December 2022.*

TRAIL TYPES





Top: The Reeves Creek Trail in Stockbridge, Georgia, runs through a wooded area near a creek and includes picnic pavilions and playgrounds along it.

Bottom: A boardwalk trail condition along the Peachtree Creek Greenway.

Feedback on Trail Types

During the public engagement events, Clarkston residents shared their preference for the trail to be away from I-285 and Highway 78. Residents stated that the trail along these routes would not connect to apartments within the city and that the walking experience would be unpleasant due to noise pollution, air pollution, and trash. The majority of online survey respondents voted for the trail to run along potential easements through apartment complexes instead of the highways.

"Running parallel with the highway sounds less than ideal (road noise, possible trash, etc)."



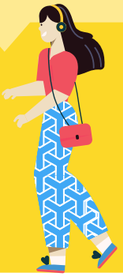
Trail segments like B1, B5, and B6 received support because they are located on existing streets. However, residents also suggested prioritizing parks and playgrounds along these streets because they already have sidewalks.

In this study, Option C runs along the South Fork Peachtree Creek and through the Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary. It is a nature trail that lets users to explore the city's natural resources while also connecting to apartments and local institutions along the way. During the public engagement events, an overwhelming number of Clarkston residents expressed their preference for the Option C trail, stating that they would like to be near the creek.

Residents expressed concerns about safety and security in nature trails and emphasized the need for pedestrian lighting. People also suggested having multiple access points to the trail, making the trail accessible to as many people as possible.

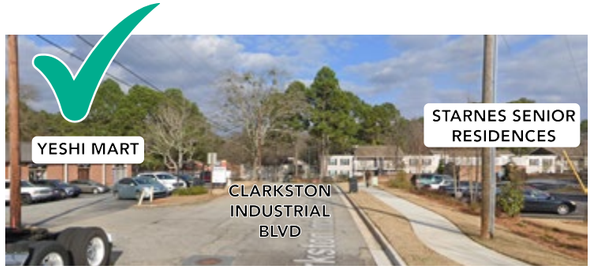
Finally, the importance of ecological design with minimal impact to trees and habitats was voiced by many residents.

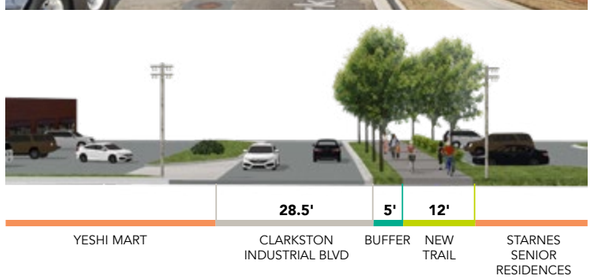
"YES! A million times yes. Down the creek, connecting the neighborhoods! I've lived near paths like this and people LOVE them."

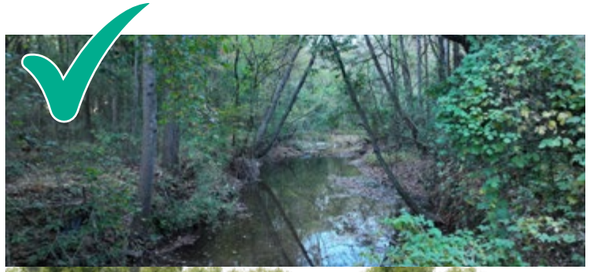


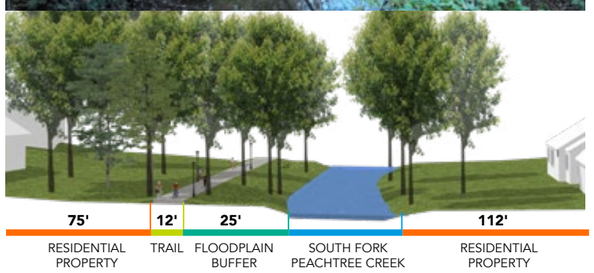












SCORES FOR TRAIL SEGMENTS

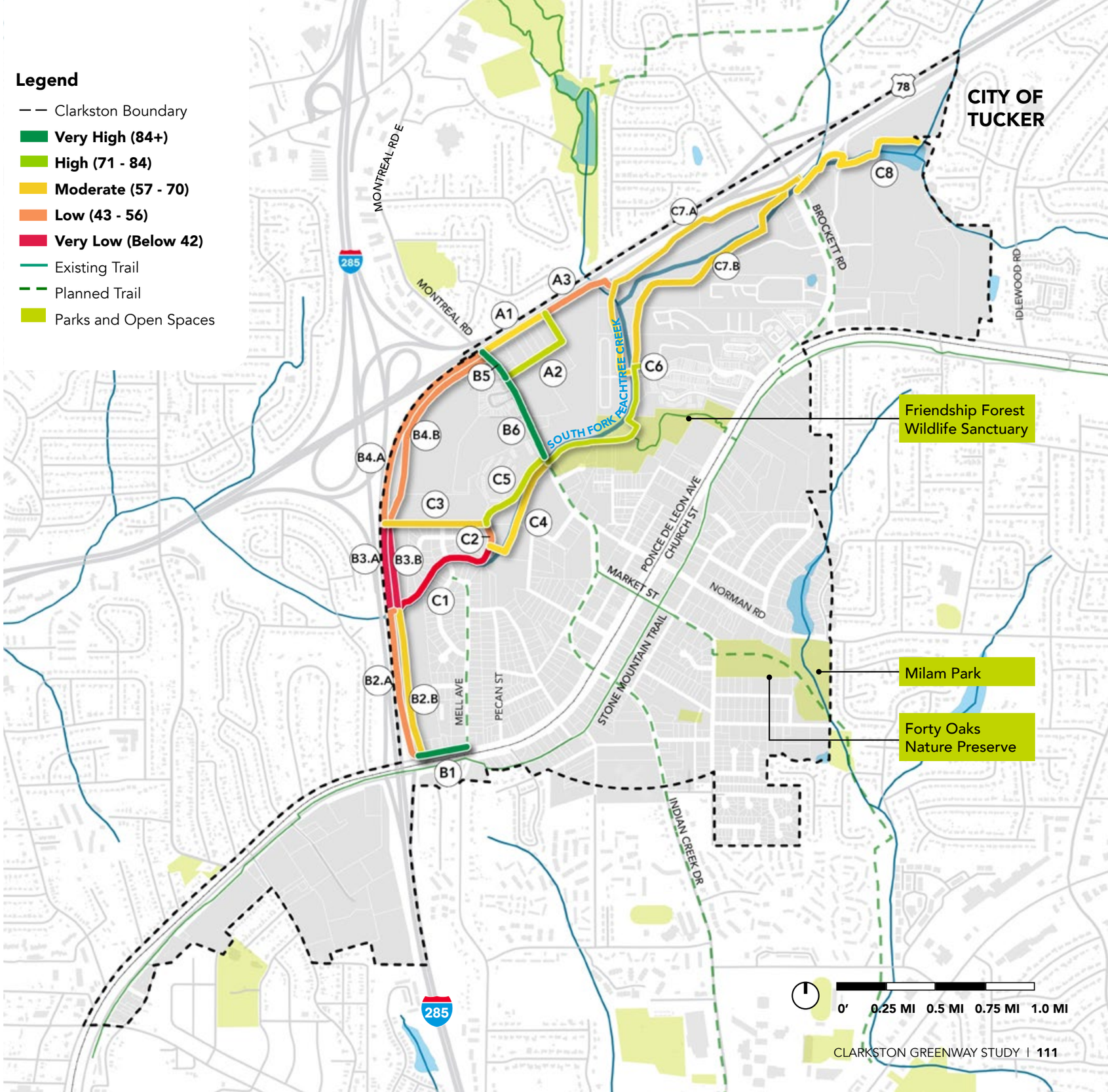
The map to the right shows the scores for each segment, with dark green indicating the highest score and red indicating the lowest score. A higher score means the trail segment received more public support, is more feasible due to on-site conditions, and meets the goals of the study as established through community feedback. A lower score can be the result of poor public support, difficult site conditions leading to increased cost, or poor connectivity to existing community resources.

» On-street trails like B1, B5, and B6 scored the highest because they are easier to implement by only requiring modifications to existing infrastructure.

» C1, B3.A, and B3.B scored the lowest because they require coordination with multiple property owners, including multiple single-family homeowners. While these trail segments connect to streets like Casa Lane and Casa Drive, they do not directly connect to community resources.

» Trails along the creek are important because they open access to a natural resource within the city and can also connect to multiple apartment complexes along the route where residents currently must walk long distances to reach major streets. The trail provides a shorter option.

» For trail segments with alternate routes (B3, B4, C7), both alternatives have scored similarly. However, the community indicated a strong preference for segments along potential apartment easements or along the creek (Option B) rather than segments along I-285 or Highway 78 (Option A).









CHAPTER 4

Recommendations

Proposed Final Trail Route
Trail Design and Materials
Proposed Parks and Placemaking
Public Art and Wayfinding
Trail Furniture
Safety and Security
Policy Recommendations

PROPOSED FINAL TRAIL ROUTE

Route Summary

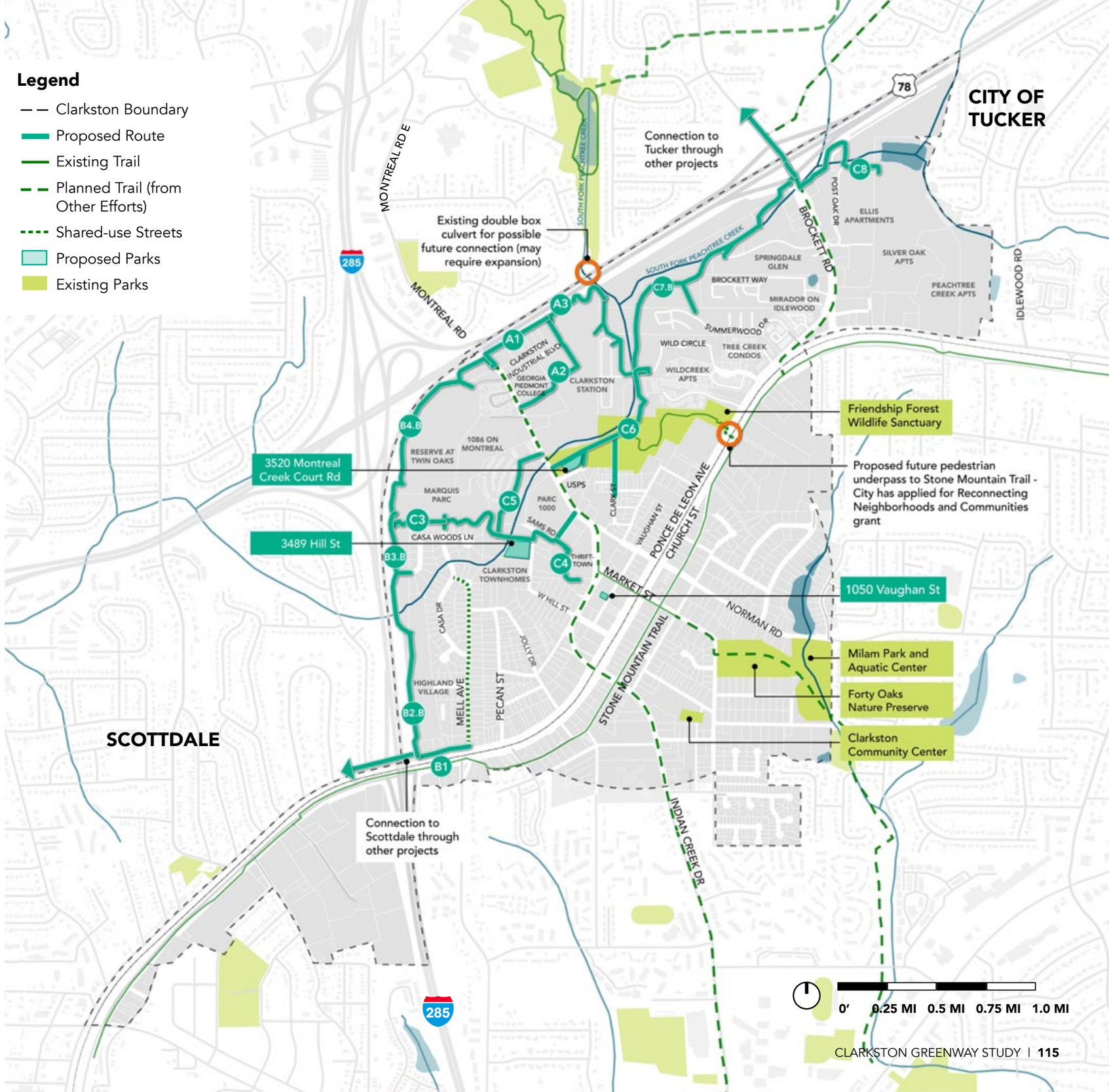
The proposed final trail route is a result of public feedback from the pop-ups and online activities in February and March 2024, additional site visits to verify site conditions and topography, and conversations with the Project Advisory Group and City Councilmembers. The entire length of the trail shown in green is 5.8 miles, and it will be constructed in phases as described in Chapter 5.

Community and Regional Connections

This route offers multiple trail spur connections to many apartment complexes and safe crossings on major corridors, like Ponce de Leon Avenue, Brockett Road, and Montreal Road. Safe crossings will include crosswalks and RRFB or HAWK signals, as described on page 136. Regional connections are also considered to the Stone Mountain Trail, Scottdale and Tucker. The City of Tucker has their own trail projects, and it is imagined that the Clarkston Greenway would connect to these initiatives on Brockett Road and / or under Highway 78. he City of Clarkston will re-apply for a federal Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant in Fall 2024 to construct a crossing under the railroad tracks across from Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, connecting the greenway to the Stone Mountain Trail.

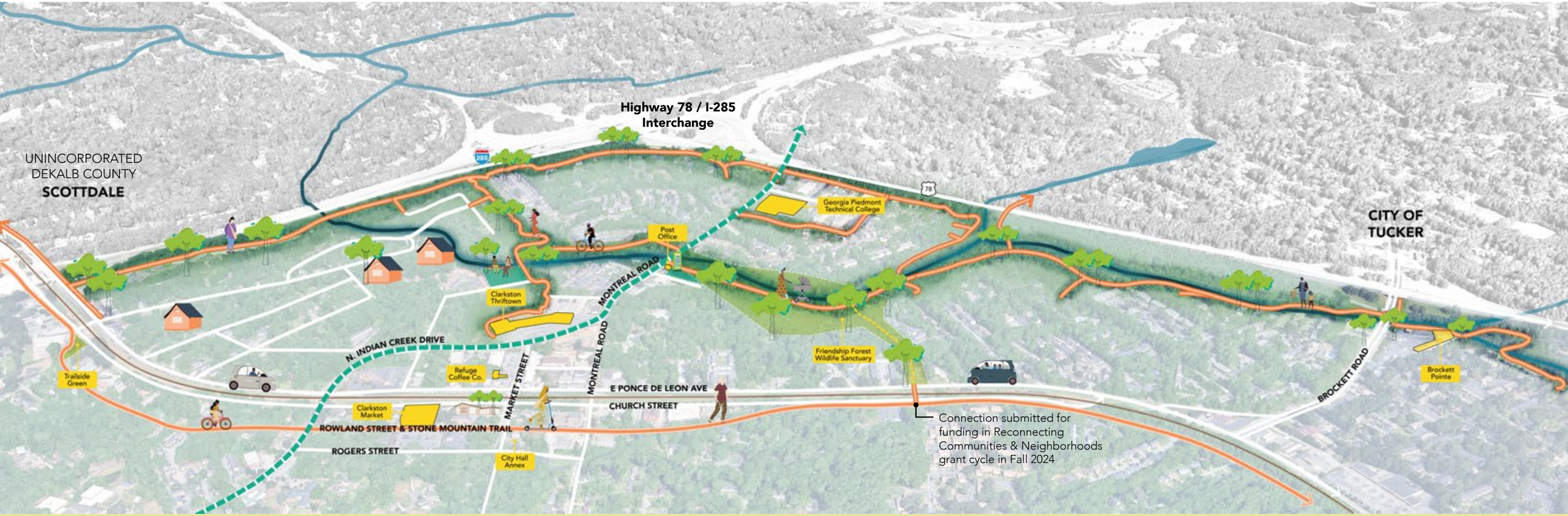
Montreal Road / N. Indian Creek Drive

This study originally included a route along Montreal Road from Highway 78 south to the South Fork Peachtree Creek. However, the City of Clarkston was awarded a large planning grant from the federal Safe Streets for All program (SS4A) that is designing a road diet for Montreal Road and N. Indian Creek Drive to reduce travel lanes or lane widths and improve safety. Because of this, that segment was removed, but recommendations are provided for how that study could design Montreal Road. The Clarkston Greenway will link to this future streetscape and pedestrian enhancement project.



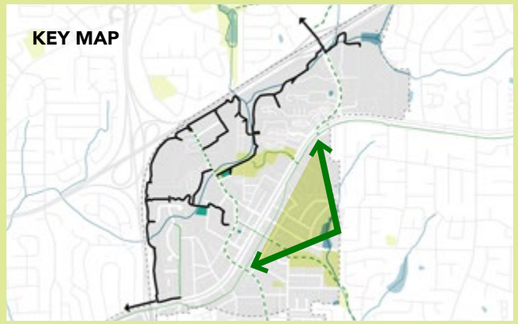
Chapter 4 | Recommendations

PROPOSED FINAL TRAIL ROUTE



Local and Regional Connections

This image, facing northwest, shows how the entire trail network would connect within Clarkston, future connections into Scottdale and the city of Tucker, and across the railroad tracks to the Stone Mountain Trail. The dashed green line shows the future road diet project on Montreal Road and N. Indian Creek Drive, which will include a streetscape re-design with wider sidewalks, potentially a multi-use trail as shown on page 120, and safer, signalized pedestrian crossings.



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PROPOSED FINAL TRAIL ROUTE

This view shows the Clarkston Greenway running along the South Fork Peachtree Creek, behind the Plantation Condominiums. The trail joins at Montreal Road and continues along the creek towards Friendship Forest. The greenway will include environmental clean-up to make the creek more accessible and will have a mix of paved paths and boardwalks.



Montreal Road

Plantation Condominiums

Clarkston Greenway

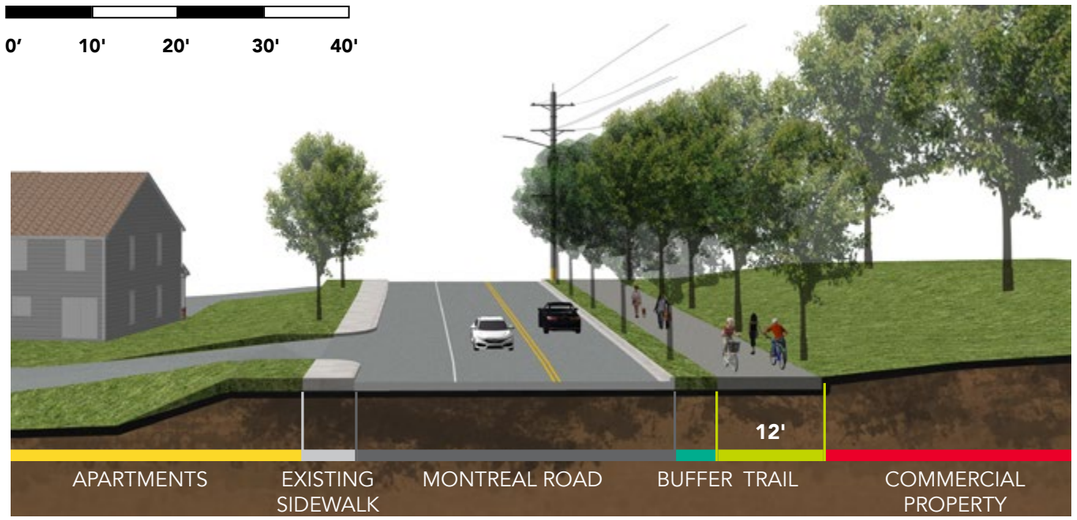
South Fork Peachtree Creek

PROPOSED FINAL TRAIL ROUTE

MONTREAL ROAD & SOUTH FORK PEACHTREE CREEK

Montreal Road

The City of Clarkston will embark on a planning study for a road diet on Montreal Road and N. Indian Creek Drive, funded by the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) program. Initially, this greenway study included trail segments on Montreal Road from Highway 78 to South Fork Peachtree Creek. Once the SS4A grant was awarded, the study focused on connecting the trails to the streetscape improvements along Montreal Road and making recommendations for the corridor re-design. The images below and to the right show a buffered (with trees, street lights, and landscaping), 12-foot wide multi-use trail on the east side of the street. The preferred side of the street for the trail could change depending on the future planning study. The before and after images show where Montreal Road meets the Clarkston Greenway at the South Fork Peachtree Creek. This location could become a trailhead with seating, multi-lingual signage, and other amenities. This study also recommends HAWK signals at trail crossings on Montreal Road for pedestrian safety. Currently, no crosswalks exist on Montreal Road north of Market Street until the RRFB and crosswalk near Noble Vines Drive (over 2,000 feet). Safe crossings for the Clarkston Greenway at the South Fork Peachtree Creek and near the post office can help pedestrians access community landmarks and bus stops safely.





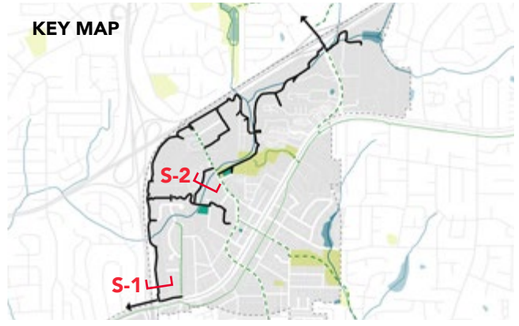


PROPOSED FINAL TRAIL ROUTE

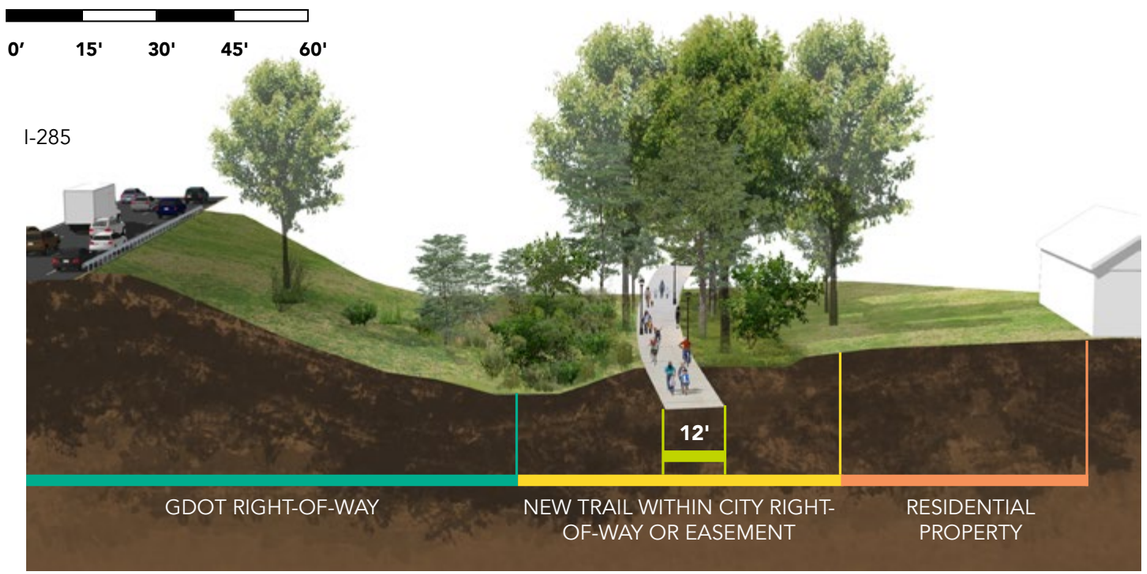
TYPICAL TRAIL SECTIONS

Typical Trail Sections

The Clarkston Greenway will have multiple design conditions throughout the proposed route because it will run on-street, within potential easements in apartment properties, within the DeKalb County sewer easement along the South Fork Peachtree Creek, along the creek in other locations, and behind private properties. These sections illustrate some of the typical conditions. The trail will usually be 12 feet wide and include landscape improvements and environmental clean-up in places where it is needed, like along the creek and in floodplains.



S.1 Trail Section in a Potential Apartment Easement or City Right-of-Way by I-285



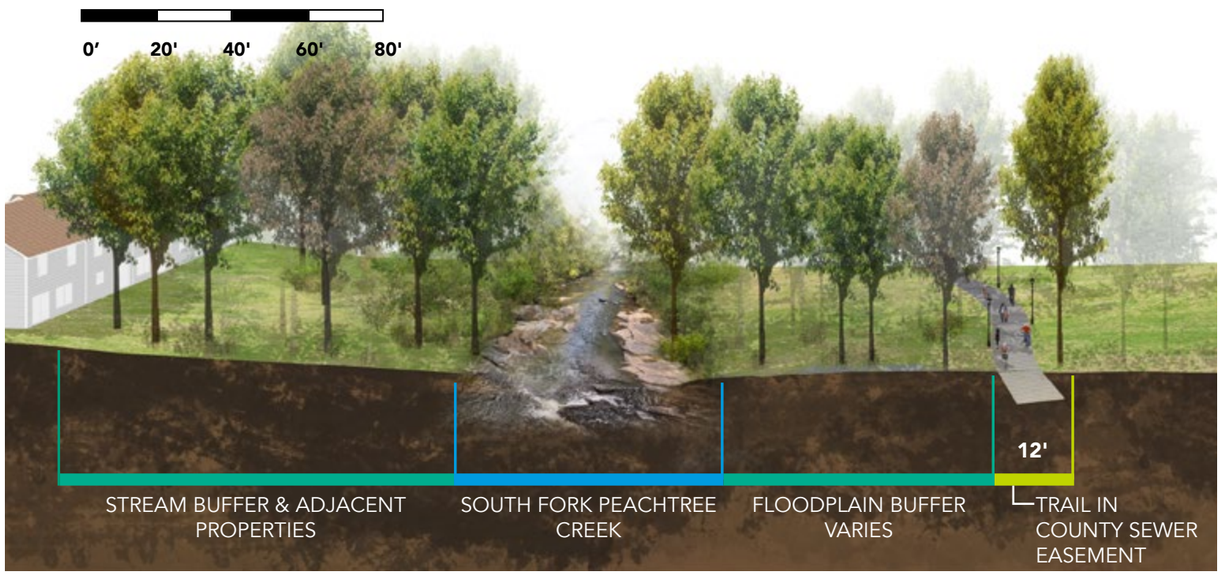
Below, left: Extra land behind the Highland Village apartments near I-285 that could accommodate a trail through an easement.

Below, right: The South Fork Peachtree Creek through Clarkston.





S.2 Trail Section in the DeKalb County Sewer Easement

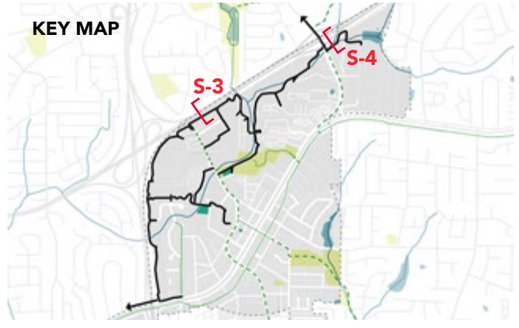


PROPOSED FINAL TRAIL ROUTE

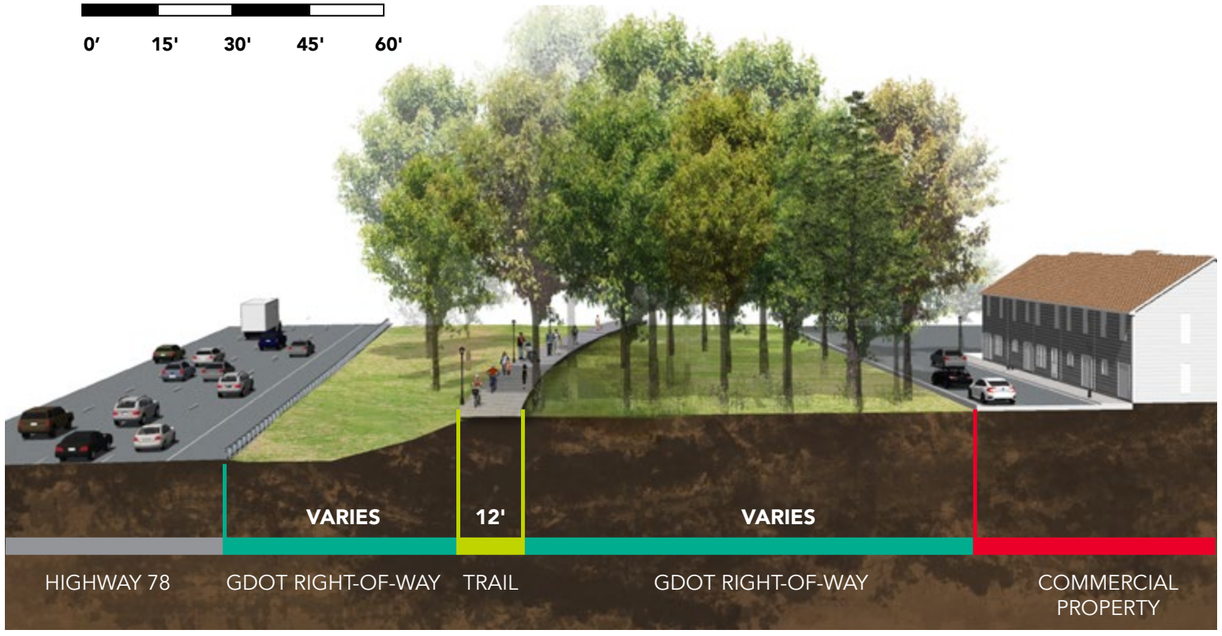
TYPICAL TRAIL SECTIONS

Typical Trail Sections

The section below illustrates how the trail will run along Highway 78 in GDOT right-of-way. Landscaping improvements will help to create a buffer from the highway while still providing easy access from Montreal Road and businesses along Clarkston Industrial Boulevard. The section to the right shows the trail running between the creek and residential properties, and will be located out of the floodplain. Fences will be placed along the apartments for privacy and security.



S.3 Trail Section Along Highway 78 in GDOT Right-of-Way



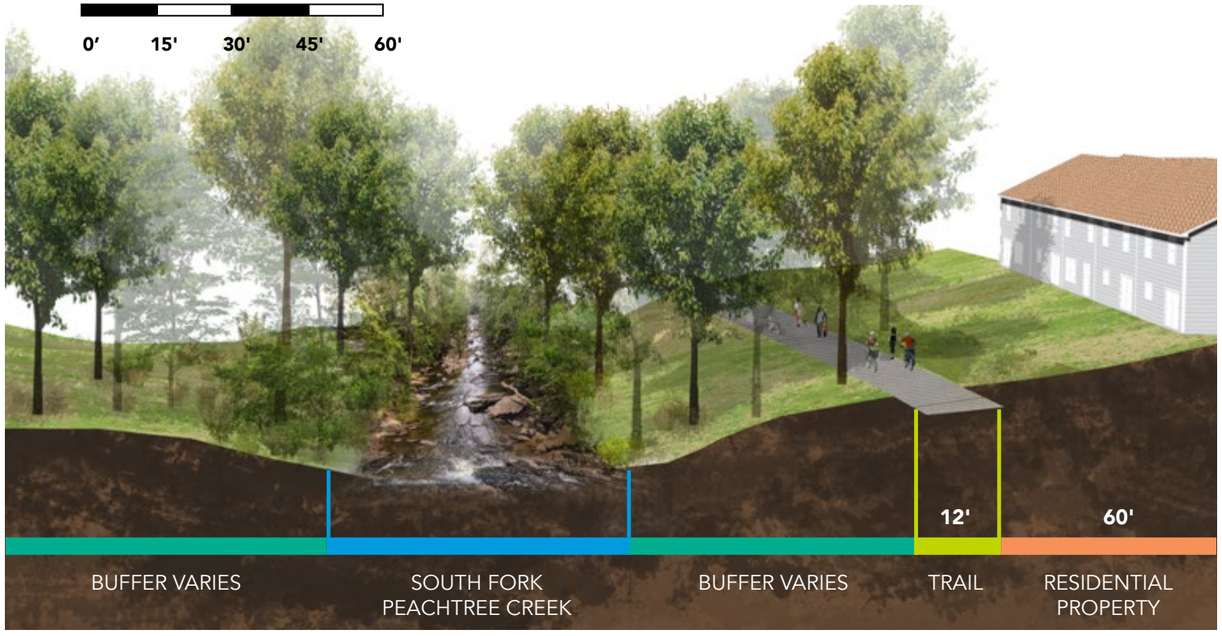
Below, left: GDOT right-of-way running along Highway 78 with the Montreal Road bridge ahead.

Below, right: View of the reservoir behind the Ellis Apartments where the last segment of the Clarkston Greenway will loop into Post Oak Drive.





S.4 Trail Section Near the Creek and Residential Properties



Chapter 4 | Recommendations

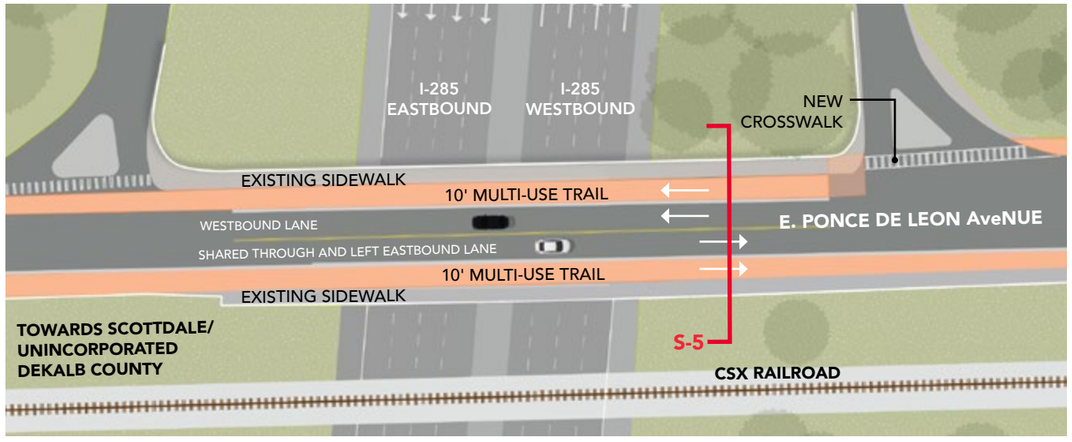
PROPOSED FINAL TRAIL ROUTE

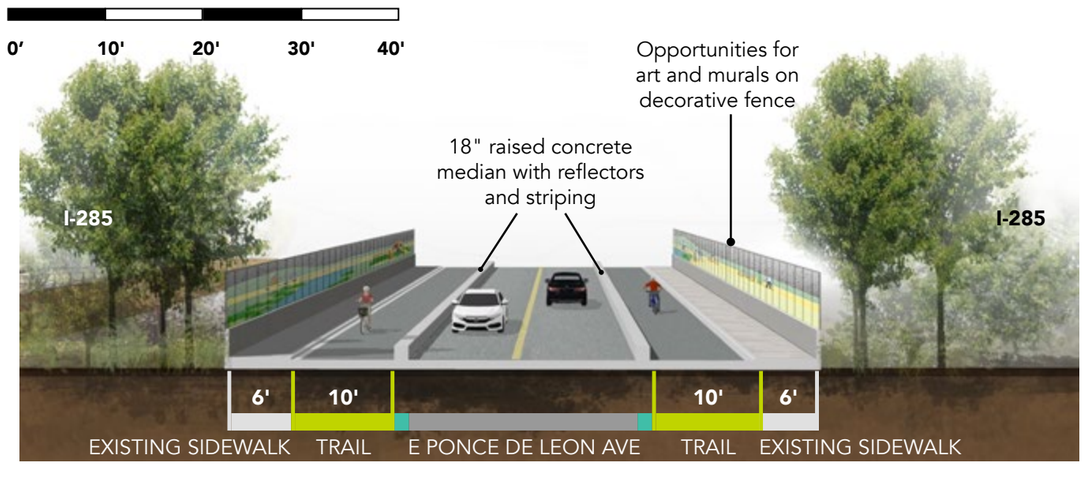
FUTURE CONNECTIONS

S.5 Trail Section on East Ponce de Leon Avenue at I-285

A future connection from Clarkston to Scottdale can be created by extending the greenway trail along East Ponce de Leon Avenue through a road diet. The trail could run on the north or the south of the street. When designed, a traffic study should be conducted to understand the need for vehicular lanes.

Conceptual Plan (not at the same scale as the section)

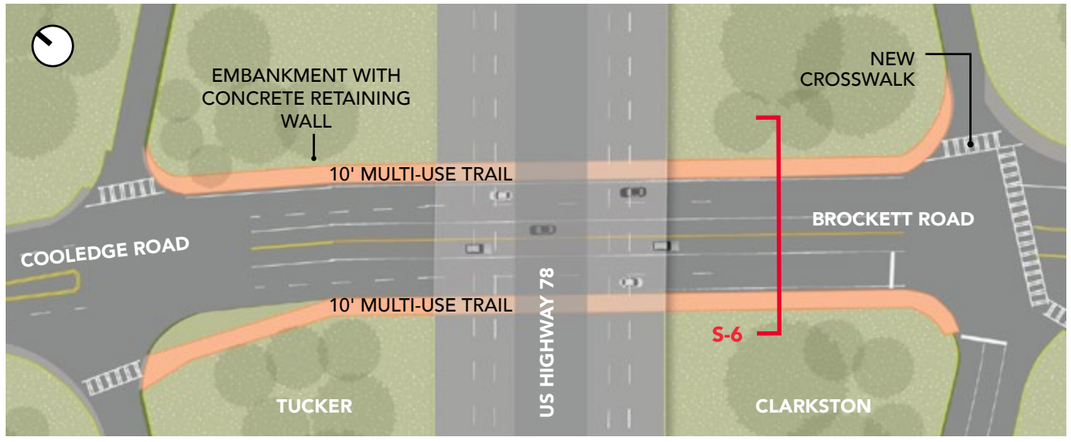


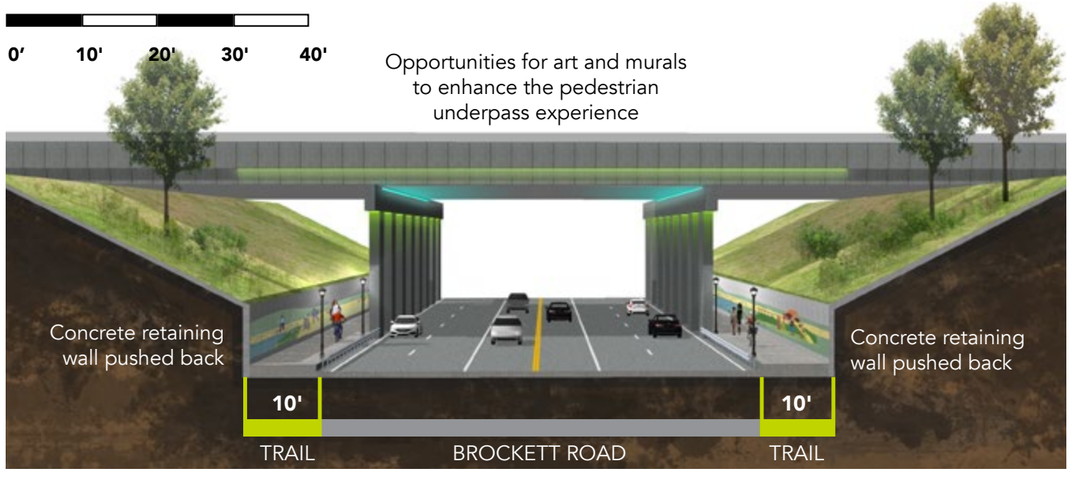


S.6 Trail Section on Brockett Road at Highway 78

The Clarkston Greenway can connect to Tucker via Brockett Road under Highway 78, by pushing the embankment back and creating a 10-foot wide multi-use trail on both sides of the street. This configuration requires no changes to vehicular lanes, but requires moving the existing retaining walls.

Conceptual Plan (not at the same scale as the section)





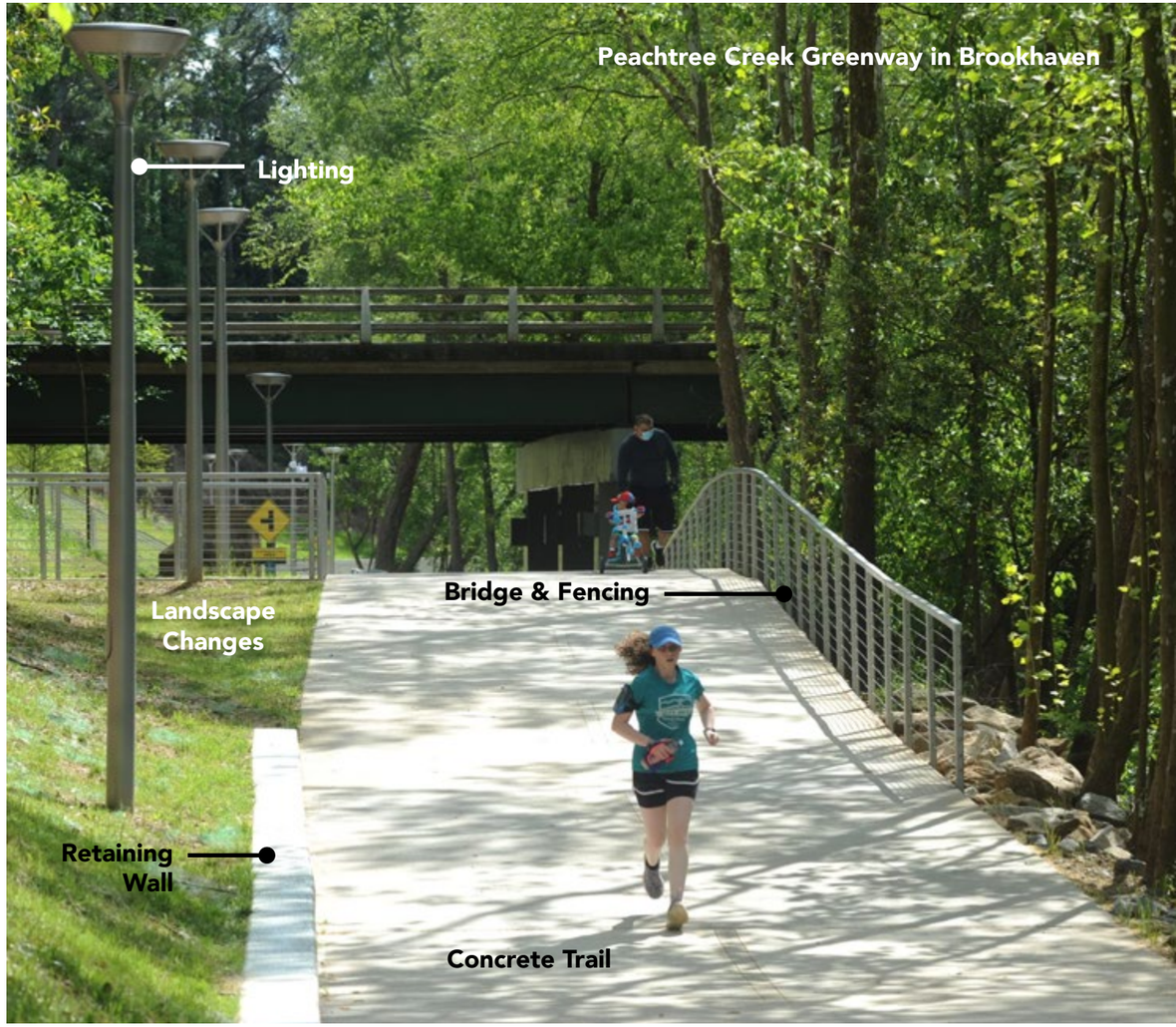
TRAIL DESIGN & MATERIALS

Materials

Trails and greenways can be constructed using asphalt, concrete, boardwalks, fine gravel, or mulch. The Clarkston Greenway's cost estimate assumes a 12-foot wide asphalt multi-use trail, but concrete is also provided as an alternative in the estimates because it lasts longer than asphalt, should the City of Clarkston decide to consider life-cycle cost rather than initial cost. All trails will be striped with markings for travel directions and crosswalks when crossing streets. Bridges will be required in about eight places over the South Fork Peachtree Creek, and they will vary in length (between 30 and 175 linear feet long) depending on the span required to meet the grade of the trail on both sides of the creek. As the trail is designed in more detail, there are opportunities for boardwalks along the creek in the floodplains, which could be secondary trails or the Clarkston Greenway itself. Trails within or near the floodplains will occasionally flood during rain events, making them unusable at those times.

Other elements and materials will help create a pleasant environment for trail users, like retaining walls, fencing, and landscaping. Retaining walls will be used to make up elevation changes, and landscaping improvements assume trees planted every 30 feet along both sides of the trail, clearing of invasive species, and planting new turf or other plants. For example, near the creek, more moisture-tolerant plants could be planted to help with stormwater run-off and to cultivate animal habitat. In other places, the City may want to include special planting design for other purposes, like pollinator gardens, butterfly gardens, or plants for visual interest.

Additional information about other materials, like furniture, lighting, fencing, pedestrian safety elements, and signage is on subsequent pages.

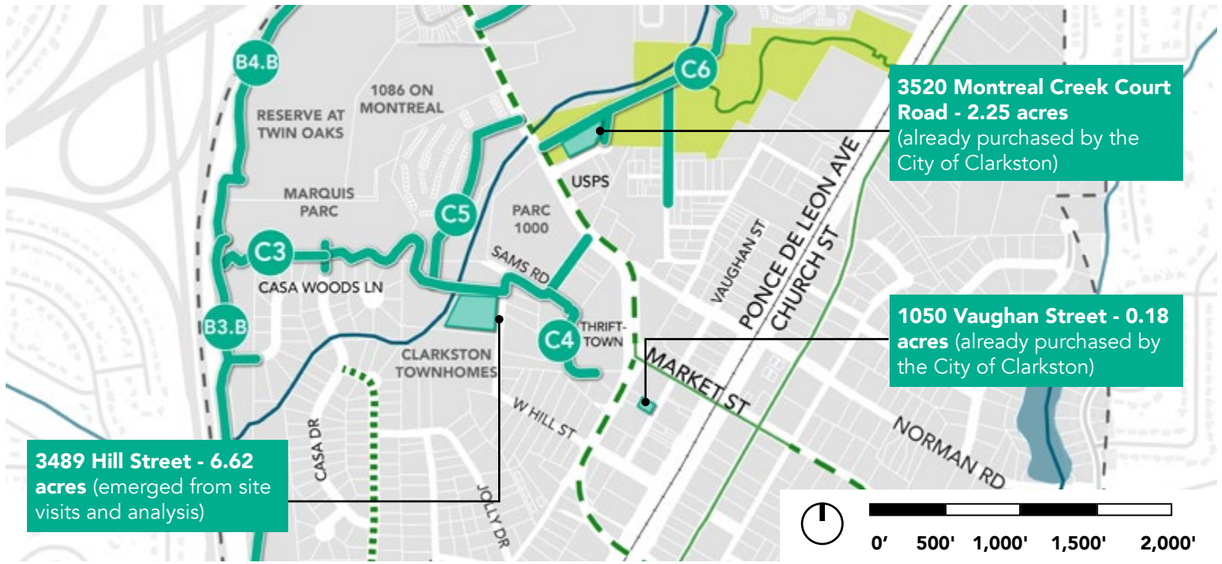


Right: The Peachtree Creek Greenway in Brookhaven runs along apartments, with a protective fence and gated access (Source: Jonathan McCaig).

PROPOSED PARKS AND PLACEMAKING

Community Spaces

The City of Clarkston has already added multiple pocket parks throughout the city, and others can be added as the greenway is constructed. Some proposed locations evolved from the site analysis and public engagement processes, shown below. The parcels by Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary at 3520 Montreal Creek Court Road and at 1050 Vaughan Street are owned by the City. The City has started community discussions about the parcel by Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, and some have suggested that a splash pad and / or playground should be built here. 3489 Hill Street is not owned by the City, so coordination as the trail and park are designed will be required. The proposed parks make up 9 acres of new green space (if the entire parcel at 3489 Hill Street is used as a park) in addition to the space dedicated to the greenway itself. Public art and community gardens were noted as important elements to include in pocket parks or along the greenway.



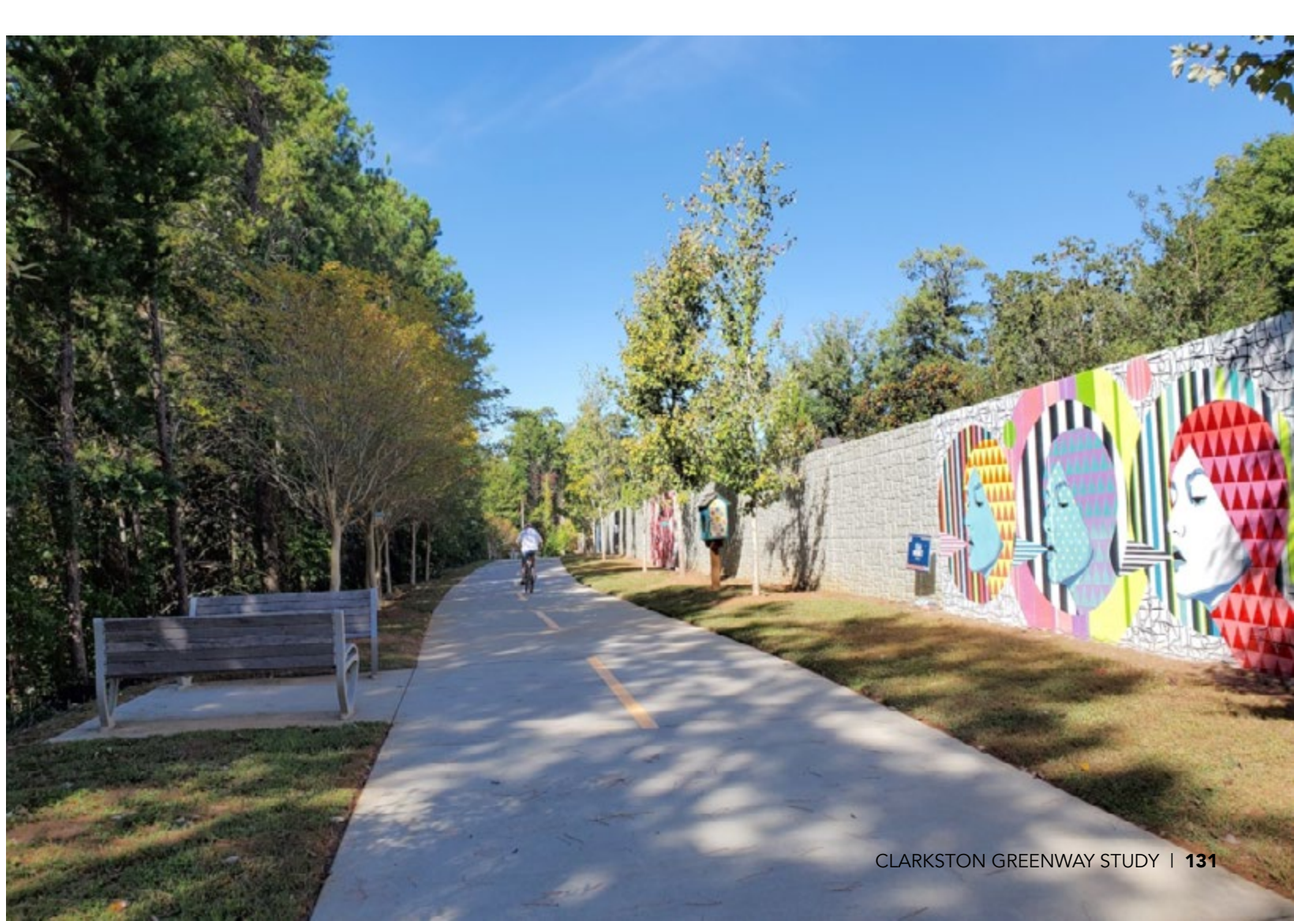


Opposite, top left: Pocket park on N. Indian Creek Drive in Clarkston.

Opposite, top right: An example of a community garden (Source: Park Pride website).

Opposite, bottom: Public art on PATH400 (Source: PATH400 website).





PUBLIC ART AND WAYFINDING

Wayfinding

Signage along the trail will be key to help trail users know where they are. Signage can take multiple forms, and the City will need to conduct a wayfinding study to design the signage and determine what needs to be on it. Static signs, like the image on the bottom right, will let people know they are on the Clarkston Greenway and can also provide information about upcoming destinations, trail rules, and mileage markers. Different types of static signs will be needed for different conditions, like trailheads, parks, and places along the trail. Electronic signage like the bottom left will allow the City more flexibility to change information available, like upcoming events and programming, and to provide translations into many languages. The City may also earn revenue from advertisements to help pay for public art, parks, and other amenities along the Clarkston Greenway. These may be most appropriate at street intersections and trailheads because of their size and the amount of information provided.

Bottom, left: Digital information and wayfinding boards in the city of Atlanta (Source: Jonathan McCaig).

Bottom, right: Wayfinding sign on the Peachtree Creek Greenway (Source: Jonathan McCaig).

Opposite, bottom right: New bus stops on East Ponce de Leon Avenue in Clarkston.





Public Art

The idea to add public art along the trail emerged throughout the engagement process. In fact, during the goal setting exercise,"public art by local artists" was one of the ideas that received the most votes. This was not used as a specific metric to evaluate the trail segments because it is difficult to measure at this stage, but the idea was carried through the conceptual design of the trails and proposed route. There are many examples of public art throughout Clarkston, like the Story Walk at Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary installed by CDF Action, the improved and colorful bus shelters with "Freedom" in multiple languages, the painted crosswalks on Market Street near Refuge Coffee, Trailside Green park that includes historic information about the Georgia Railroad, the mural at Refuge Coffee, and the recently-painted mural on the Clarkston Community Center. As of the writing of this report, the City is also collaborating with Living Walls for a large mural under the railroad overpass on N. Indian Creek Drive. The City's Public Art Advisory Committee and Downtown Development Agency (DDA) can build on these initiatives and collaborate with organizations who work with local artists, like Living Walls, the Clarkston Community Center, and other culturally-specific organizations, to design and place art along the trail and in pocket parks. The City may also need to allocate specific funding from the General Fund, DDA, and / or development projects. They could also coordinate the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners to allocate funding or apply for relevant grants to pay for the public art.

Art on the Atlanta BeltLine

Public art is a major attraction along the Atlanta BeltLine. The Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. has created an Art and Culture Strategic Implementation Plan and Public Art Program to guide the permanent and temporary / rotating art pieces along the Atlanta BeltLine. The exhibition showcases murals, sculptures, pop-up events, performance art, and programs from artists from Atlanta and beyond. Funding for Art on the Atlanta BeltLine comes from multiple sources, like the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, Fulton County Board of Commissioners, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and philanthropic donations.

The City of Clarkston's Public Art Advisory Committee and City staff can look to the Atlanta BeltLine for ideas on how to establish a public art plan and program throughout the city or along the future greenway.



TRAIL FURNITURE

Benches, Bike Racks, & Trash Cans

Trail furniture along the Clarkston Greenway will improve the safety and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists, and it will increase the cleanliness of the trail. Trail furniture includes all the benches, bike racks, trash cans, and lighting along the trails. Benches will be provided at pocket parks, trailheads, and at regular intervals along the trail, giving people a place to rest. Picnic tables can also be added at pocket parks for picnics and other small gatherings. Bike racks can be provided at trailheads, in pocket parks, near apartment communities and other community destinations, and at trail entrances. Trash cans will also be provided at pocket parks, trailheads, and at entrances to apartment communities, if a trail connection is provided.

Lighting

The Clarkston Greenway will be used for commuting and recreation by residents of the city. It is recommended to be open all times of day. Pedestrian lights that are on from dusk until 11:00 PM will offer residents a safe walking and biking path in the evenings. This has been successful in places in the Atlanta region, like on the Peachtree Creek Greenway in Brookhaven, shown in the images below and to the right.

Lights will also be LED for energy conservation, and dark-sky compliant to reduce glare for trail users and to reduce light pollution, which can affect animal habitat.













Top, left: Picnic tables near the PATH 400 Greenway (Source: PATH 400).

Middle: Evening lighting along the Peachtree Creek Greenway in Brookhaven (Source: City of Brookhaven).

Bottom, left: Trash cans outside apartment complexes; Bottom, right: Bike racks along the Atlanta BeltLine (Source: Jonathan McCaig).

(Opposite)
Bottom, left: Trail furniture along the LINC Trail in Newnan, Georgia;
Bottom, right: Trail swings along the Peachtree Creek Greenway in Brookhaven (Source: Jonathan McCaig).

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Secure Trail Access

Because many segments of the Clarkston Greenway will run next to apartment complexes and some single-family properties, access will need to be controlled in these areas to protect property owners and make them feel more secure. In most cases, this will involve decorative fencing to separate the trail from the properties (see example on the adjacent page) with gates at trail spur access points. In other cases, this could involve denser vegetation, like shrubs and trees, between properties and the trails. Fencing could also be accompanied by vegetation. Apartment communities could have a pin code or card reader to enter and exit the trail, preventing other trail users from entering the apartment communities, as shown on the adjacent page.

Lighting & Security Cameras

Pedestrian lighting placed every 75 feet along the Clarkston Greenway, as described on the previous page, will help keep the trail more secure after dusk. Light poles will need to be placed to reduce glare that can impede visibility. Throughout the engagement process, many mentioned the need for security cameras. It is recommended that cameras are placed at trail entrances. The trail design and cost estimates (Chapter 5) include the cost for electrical conduit so that the City can add the lighting, cameras, and emergency phones where desired.

Safe Crossings

Ensuring pedestrian safety through minimizing conflicts with cars on streets is one of the metrics used to evaluate the trail segments. The Clarkston Greenway will cross streets throughout the entirety of the proposed route. Crossings will occur on Montreal Road in two places, on Hill Street, and on Brockett Road near Highway 78. Montreal Road and Brockett Road are both auto-oriented corridors, with few intersecting streets to help slow down drivers. Because of this, drivers may not expect pedestrians to cross, and visible crossings will be required to keep trail users safe. These crossings will include sidewalks and either a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) or High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) signal. RRFB signals are appropriate for multi-lane streets with speeds below 40 miles per hour and are placed on both sides of the road with a crosswalk. They have two, rectangular yellow beacons and flash once activated. They are unlit when not activated, but can be activated by a push button. HAWK signals are used on marked crosswalks, use three lights (two red, one yellow), and must be activated by a pedestrian. RRFB signals are recommended for the Hill Street and Brockett Road crossings, and a HAWK signal is recommended at Montreal Road where the trail and creek intersect the street. For additional trail safety, bollards will also be placed along the trail where it intersects with the streets to prevent cars from entering the trails.







Left: HAWK Signal on 10th Street NE in Midtown Atlanta.

Below, left: Privacy fences along apartments near the Peachtree Creek Greenway in Brookhaven (Source: Jonathan McCaig).

Below, right: Security gates with pincodes to control access into apartments from the Peachtree Creek Greenway (Source: Jonathan McCaig).

Smart Technology and Sustainability on the Trail

Smart technology and sustainability can be integrated with many elements of the trail design, like the furniture and signage. Below are examples the City may want to consider:

- Daylight fluorescent aggregate for hardscape materials, which enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety;
- Recycled materials used for greenway surfaces, which could also improve permeability and reduce stormwater run-off.
- Automatic pedestrian and bicycle counters to measure the trail's usage and demonstrate success.
- Access to WiFi throughout the greenway corridor. The City may be able to acquire funding through federal or state grants.
- Benches that incorporate solar-powered USB charging ports.
- Interpretive panels with multi-lingual voice commands.
- Solar powered lighting and cameras.

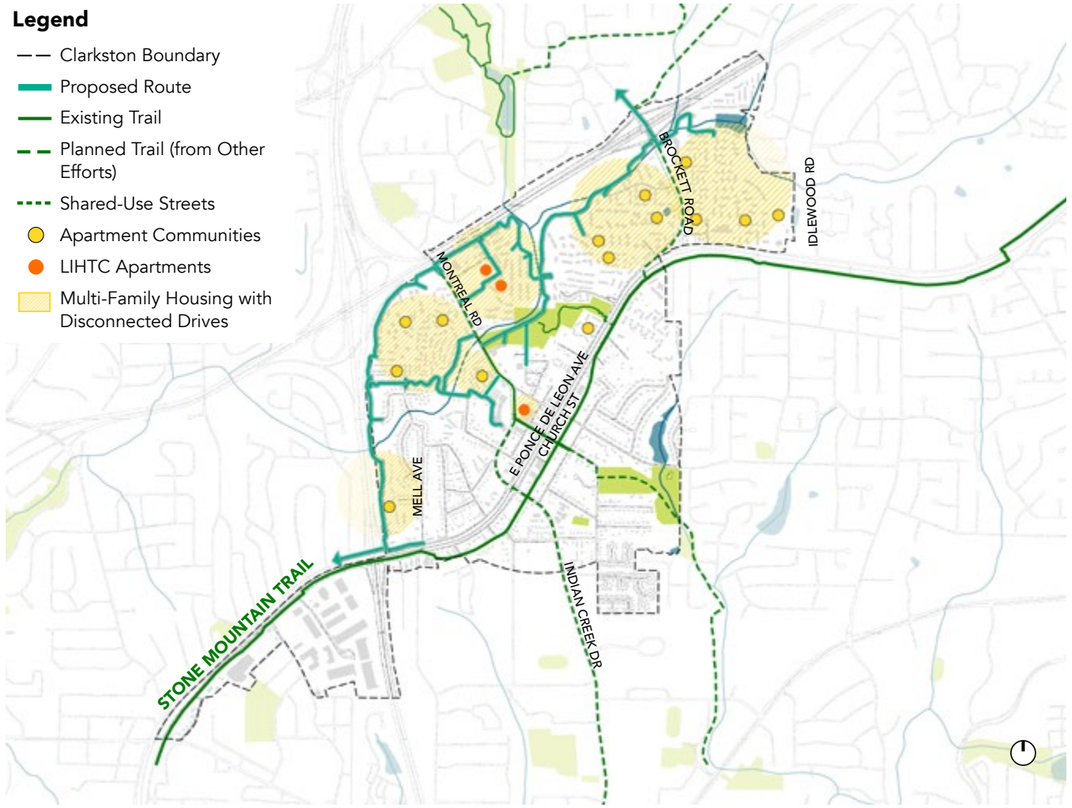
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

ENSURING LONG-TERM AFFORDABILITY

During the goal setting exercise, "ensure residents can afford to live in Clarkston" and "build trails that reach people without cars" received some of the highest votes. Equity and affordability were embedded into the evaluation for the trail segments through multiple metrics, like ensuring the trail reaches people who need it most, can get people to places they need to go more directly, and is located near properties that are not susceptible to change. These metrics help ensure that residents do not need to be dependent on using a car to meet their needs and help offset cost of living increases due to speculation from private interests resulting from the public investment in a greenway. However, ensuring long-term affordability is a complicated issue that will require other mechanisms at the city, regional, and state levels.

The top priority policies for the Clarkston 2021 Comprehensive Plan Update stressed on the need for more affordable housing, housing options for larger families, and addressing disrepair and safety concerns in apartment complexes. Currently, Clarkston has 17 apartment communities, which comprise 60% of the city's housing stock. Renters in Clarkston are more likely to be cost-burdened (spending more than 30% of their income on rent) than homeowners. Many of the apartments are poorly maintained and residents may want better management of apartment complexes, an understanding of their rights when dealing with landlords, and protections for renters.

The City of Clarkston will need to consider policies that protect legacy homeowners, renters in existing apartment complexes, and local businesses as the trail is constructed. Cities throughout the country are trying different methods to ensure long-term affordability and neighborhood stabilization, like upzoning single-family neighborhoods and inclusionary zoning, land trusts, anti-displacement tax funds, renter protections, affordable housing rehabilitation and preserving unsubsidized affordable housing, among others. In 2024, the City formed a Downtown Development Authority (DDA), which can help the City staff to advance affordability policies. This is beneficial for the DDA because the trail will generate economic development.



Tax Credits for Housing

The Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) program can be used in Clarkston to issue tax credits for acquiring, rehabilitating, or constructing affordable rental housing. Clarkston currently has three LIHTC communities, including the recently-constructed Townes at Clarkston on N. Indian Creek Drive and Montreal Road, which will offer 54 rental units at 40%, 50%, 60%, and 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). LIHTC programs have high development standards, as well as fair housing and tenant protection rules. Some apartment communities in the nearby Tucker area are transitioning to a LIHTC model by using tax credits to renovate and rehabilitate units; this is also a strategy that other apartment communities in Clarkston can consider. While the LIHTC program maintains income affordability for 15 years, it is also important to ensure that rents do not increase after that period and residents can continue to stay in the apartments. Clarkston can help potential LIHTC projects increase points through targeted participation by the City in the education and redevelopment process.

Renter Protections

There is a high renter population in Clarkston, and because many of the apartment complexes are aging, they may be susceptible to redevelopment. Because of this, renters may need more protections in place to reduce displacement, some of which are described here. One example is the right-of-first-refusal,

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

which would provide tenants and tenants groups the right to purchase apartment units that are for sale or are transitioning to condominium before they hit the market. The right-of-first-refusal could also be given to a land trust, if the City chooses to establish one. It is important to note that this effort may require state-enabling legislation. Other protections could be eviction protection, access to counsel, and access to information about their rights when dealing with landlords.

Anti-Displacement Funds
The City of Atlanta has a Senior Citizen Anti-Displacement Fund to help seniors cover the costs of property taxes, and the Westside Future Fund helps legacy homeowners on the westside of Atlanta with property taxes through philanthropic funding. This could be an option for the City of Clarkston as well, either through public funds or a philanthropic partnership. It is important to note that these require significant resources and staff time.

Community Land Trusts
The Atlanta Land Trust, a non-profit organization, builds permanently affordable housing in the city of Atlanta with an emphasis on areas around the Atlanta BeltLine. This scale of development from a land trust is likely too much for a city of Clarkston's size and could require a lot of resources, but nearby Decatur also recently established the Decatur Land Trust and could be used as a model for Clarkston. The land trust could build multi-family and single-family units, strategically purchasing land as it becomes available throughout the city or along the greenway.

While traditional land trusts focus on homeownership opportunities, the People's Community Land Trust, run by the Guild, offers rental affordability and protections by acquiring apartment communities. The Metro Atlanta Land Bank is also an option to hold and manage vacant or City-owned properties, and develop them into affordable, stable housing for low-income residents.

Rehabilitating Existing Housing
One of the most effective ways to maintain affordability is to preserve existing affordable housing. The City could encourage property owners to rehabilitate existing aging apartment buildings along the trail and help them tap into an affordable housing fund to subsidize this work. The GoATL and TogetherATL Housing funds from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta apply to projects in Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett counties.

Zoning Changes
Most of the land around the trail route is zoned for Neighborhood Residential 3, and the City of Clarkston recently updated the zoning ordinance, but it may want to consider an inclusionary zoning provision for properties abutting the trail. The City can also continue to encourage the cottage home development, like Cottages on Vaughan, for affordable homeownership around the trail. They are allowed by-right in the Neighborhood Residential 3 district.

Citywide Housing Study
The City of Clarkston may want to conduct a city-wide housing study to revisit and enhance housing goals established in the Comprehensive Plan. This study may also build on the upcoming DeKalb County Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) study for housing and land use around the Stone Mountain Trail because the entire City of Clarkston is included in the study area.

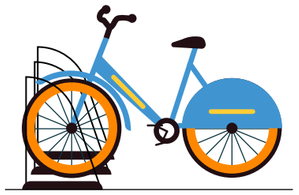
Support for Small Businesses
Clarkston has many small and micro-businesses in its downtown core. As described in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan update, the development of microenterprises and programs for entrepreneurs can help support these businesses and increase economic development through the city. Promoting commercial, arts, and tourism opportunities can increase employment within the city.

Chapter 4 | Recommendations

POLICIES & PROGRAMS CLARKSTON SHOULD EXPLORE

- Conduct a Housing Study in Clarkston that builds on the upcoming DeKalb County CDAP study for the Stone Mountain Trail. The housing study can revisit and enhance the Clarkston 2040 Comprehensive Plan housing goals for the community.
- Consider inclusionary zoning provisions for affordable housing on properties abutting the trail.
- Create an anti-displacement fund, either through public subsidies or a fund created with philanthropic partners.
- Work with organizations throughout the community to make renters aware of their rights, provide eviction protection, and connect them with Atlanta Legal Aid.
- Establish a community land trust for housing. Refer to the City of Decatur's land trust and business plan as a model. If Clarkston establishes one earlier in the trail development process, the city may not see the same rapid housing cost increases that Decatur is trying to combat.
- Help property owners and developers rehabilitate their properties and access funds to do so, like LIHTC or the GoATL Housing Fund and TogetherATL Housing Fund, to help preserve affordable housing.







CHAPTER 5

Implementation Plan

Phasing Plan and Cost Estimates
100-Day Action Plan
Full Action Plan
Funding Plan

Chapter 5 | Implementation Plan

PHASING & COST ESTIMATES

Cost Considerations

Each trail segment's cost includes the following major phases of work: engineering, right-of-way acquisition (ROW), all phases of construction, and contingency (15%) for price increases over time. All costs are provided in 2024 dollars, using best practices for trail construction.

All of the materials costs include the following design assumptions:

- A 12-foot wide asphalt greenway surface (with an alternative for concrete);
- Trail lighting with future electrical conduit. Lights are estimated to be placed every 75 feet on-center;
- Trees placed along the trail edge every 30 feet on-center.
- Signage and striping (all trails should be marked with MMA paint per NACTO, and signs and posts should be all aluminum);
- Boardwalks and bridges when necessary because of floodway and creek conditions (costed by linear feet);
- Retaining walls when necessary because of topographic conditions;
- Decorative fencing adjacent to residential properties;
- An assumption for pocket parks with seating and trash along the trail; and,
- Bollards where necessary to protect the trail from vehicles at street intersections.

$25,000,000 to $30,000,000*

**Total cost for Phases 1 to 5 of the greenway based on 2024 dollars. Does not include regional connections and recommended pocket parks shown on page 130.*

Cost Methodology

1

Assessed conditions of each trail segment evaluated in the matrix.

Multiple site visits were conducted to check topographic conditions and questions from the PAG and public; checked DeKalb Parcel Viewer for property ownership and acreage.



2

Calculated baseline costs.

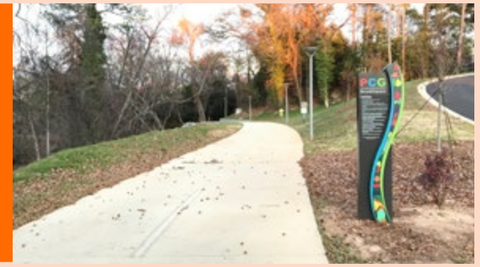
Costs were based on site conditions and length of the route (by each individual segment comprising the route) and focused on the construction.



3

Added other trail features to the cost estimates.

Wayfinding and placemaking elements, lighting, fencing, bollards, pedestrian signals, bridges were added as general cost assumptions.



PHASING & COST ESTIMATES

PHASE 1 (0.80 MILE)

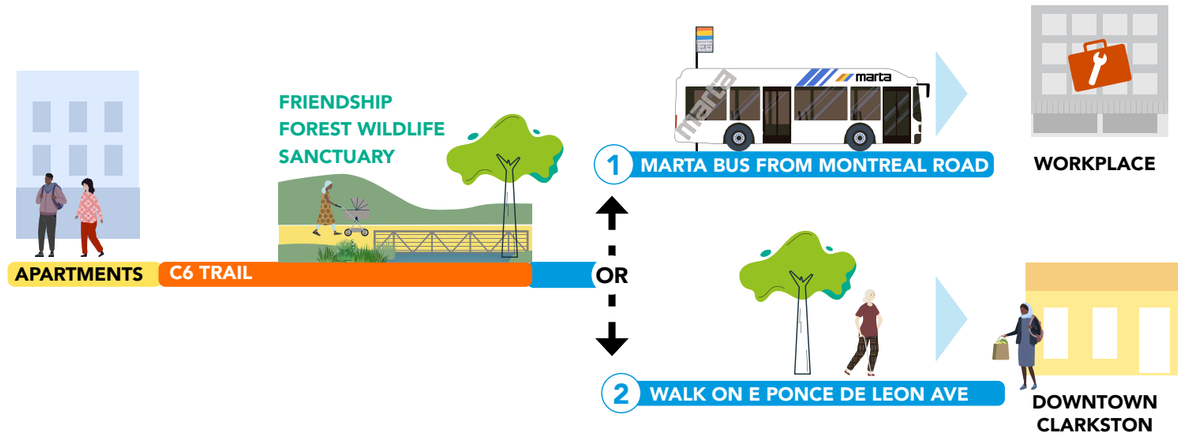
Connecting residents to Montreal Road through Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary

The full trail route is divided into six phases for implementation, all of which range from 0.7 mile to 1.35 mile in length. Each phase will connect to a previous phase and / or an existing street, trail, or destination, like Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary.

Phase 1 is segment C6 as shown below and on the next page. This segment runs from Montreal Road through Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary to Wild Circle Road, roughly 0.8 mile in length. It includes connections to Clarkston Station Apartments, Creekstone Townhomes, Wild Creek Apartments, and Cobble Hill Lane. It connects to existing sidewalks on Montreal Road and the future streetscape improvements on this street, allowing people access to the post office, better access to Downtown Clarkston, and other destinations nearby. Additionally, trail users can walk through Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary to E. Ponce de Leon Avenue, improving access to MARTA bus stops and destinations along that street for residents who need to walk a much more circuitous route today. The surveying, engineering, and right-of-way acquisition costs are in the City of Clarkston's SPLOST II funding allocation from DeKalb County.

How Phase 1 can connect you in Clarkston

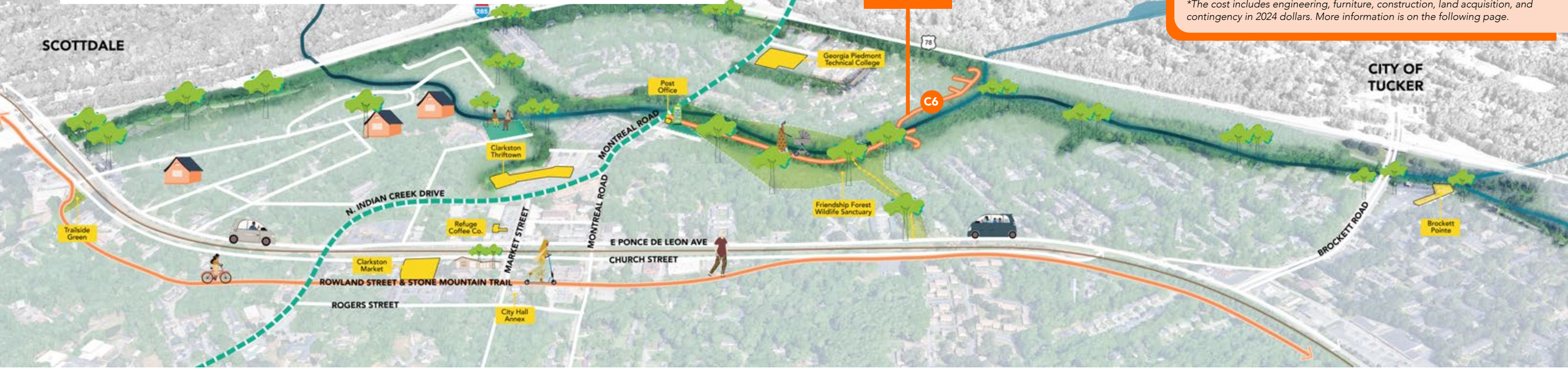
From Montreal Road to Wild Circle Road



What will Phase 1 cost?

$3,124,000*

**The cost includes engineering, furniture, construction, land acquisition, and contingency in 2024 dollars. More information is on the following page.*

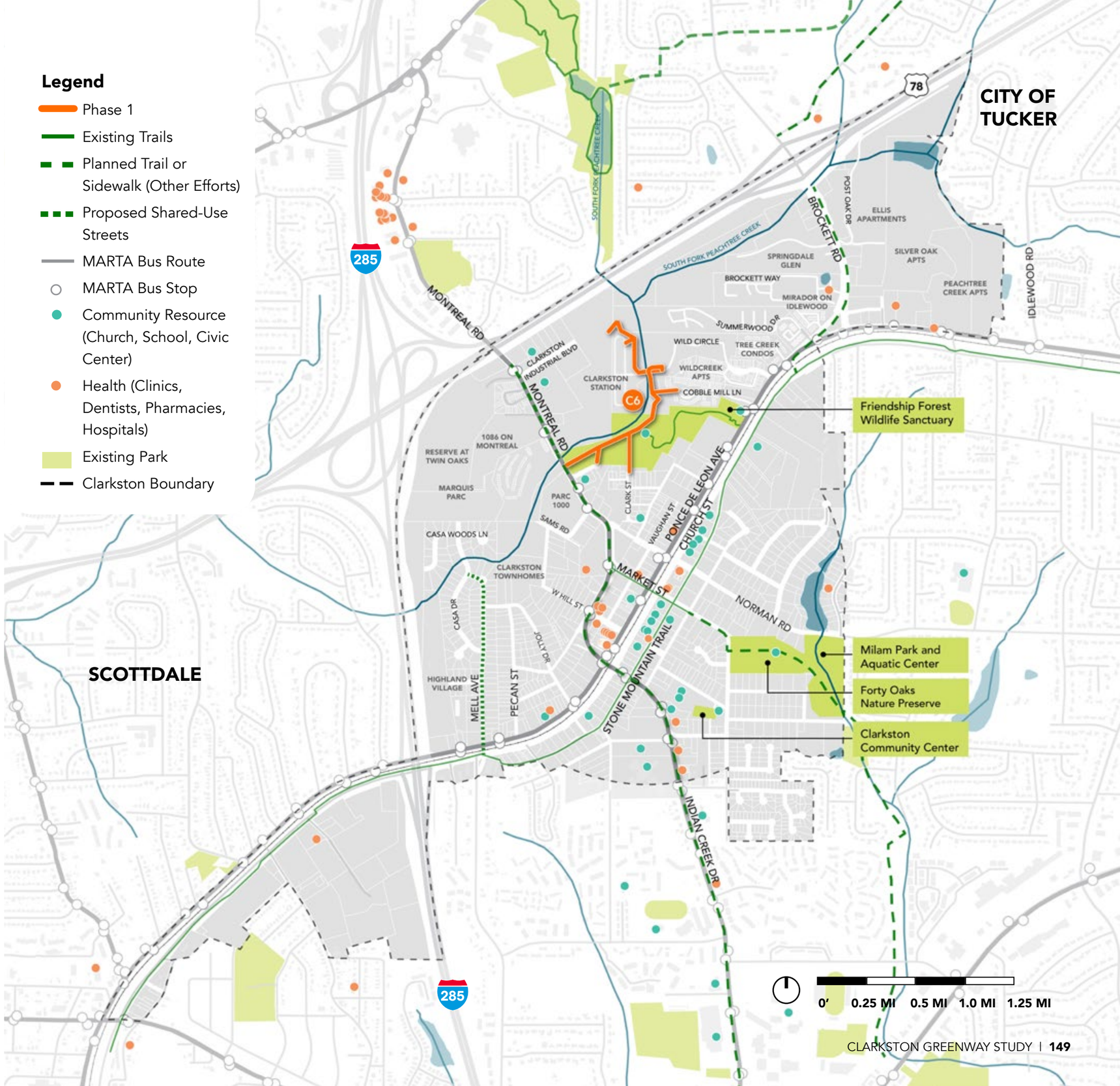


COST ESTIMATE

PHASE 1

Phase 1: Montreal Road to Wild Circle Road (0.8 mile)

Segment	Description	Cost
C6	This section of trail includes a HAWK signal to cross Montreal Road where the creek intersects, then the trail heads east from Montreal Road along the sewer easement following the south side of the creek, connecting Montreal Circle Court, Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary, Creekstone Apartments, Wildcreek Apartments, and ends at Wild Circle Road. Two (2) - 25-foot bridges are needed. At Wild Circle Road, the trail can cross under the roadway bridge then circle around connecting to Wild Circle Road at grade.	
	Engineering	$233,000
	ROW Acquisition	$294,000
	Construction	$2,200,000
	Contingency (15%)	$397,000
	Total	**$3,124,000**



PHASING & COST ESTIMATES

PHASE 2 (1.35 MILES)

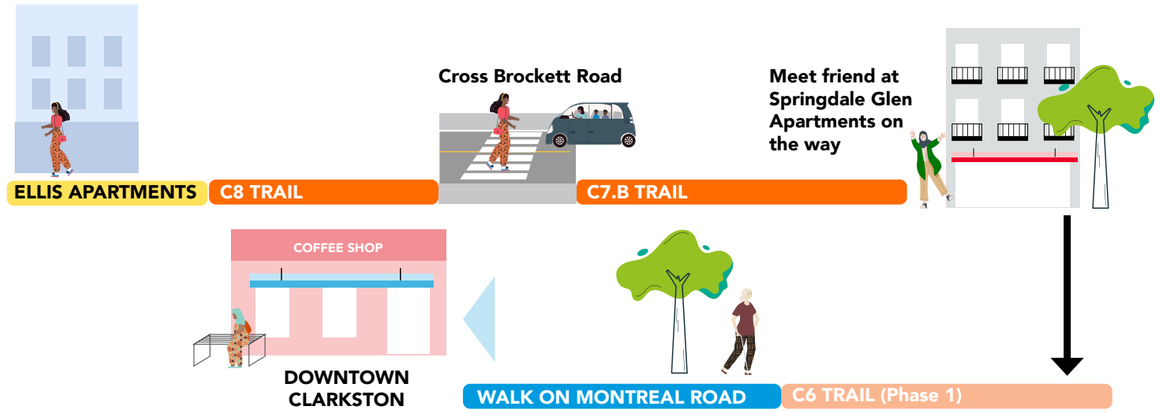
Connecting apartments and Brockett Road to Downtown Clarkston

Phase 2 is comprised of segments C7 and C8 as shown below and on the map on the next page. This segment connects to Phase 1 at Wild Circle Road and runs northeast along the South Fork Peachtree Creek to Brockett Road, roughly 1.35 miles in length. It includes connections to Birch Run Apartment Homes, Mirador at Idlewood, Springdale Glen Apartments, and Ellis Apartments. This phase will connect Brockett Road and more apartment residents on a more direct but shaded route to Downtown Clarkston, Brockett Pointe Shopping Center, and other retail on Brockett Road. With future phases and City of Tucker efforts, this segment of the trail will eventually connect to trails under Highway 78 into Tucker.

Implementation will require coordination with two apartment property owners for easements in the Silver Oak Apartments complex and the Ellis Apartments, which could cause delays. The City of Clarkston has applied for Congressional District funding to pay for the surveying and engineering fees for this phase and Phase 3.

How Phase 2 can connect you in Clarkston

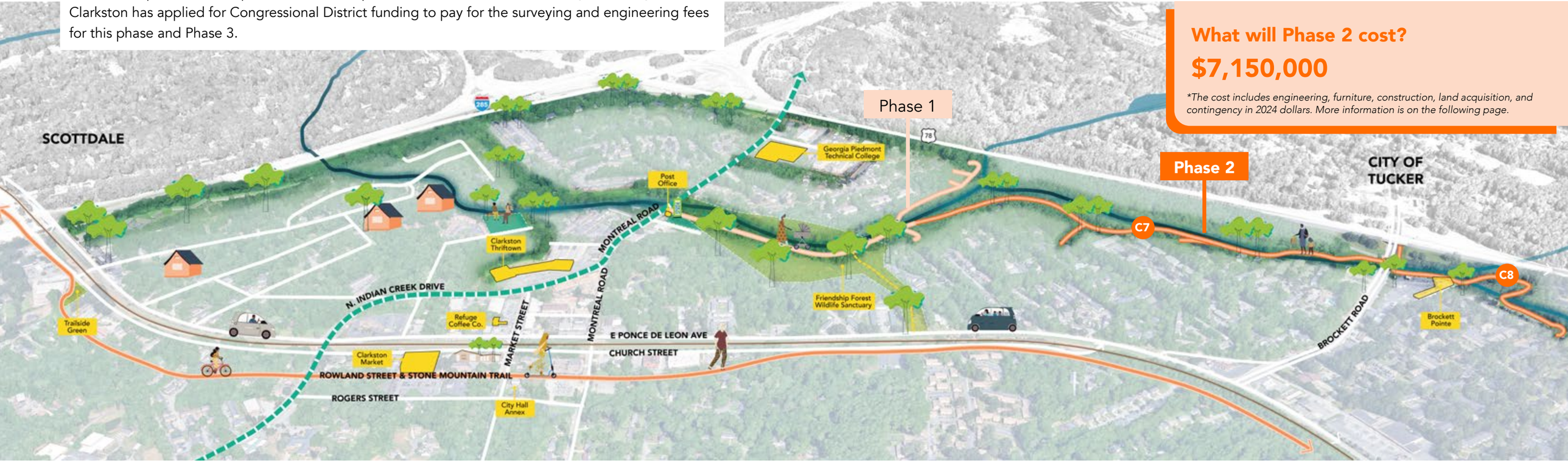
Phase 2: Wild Circle Road to Brockett Road



What will Phase 2 cost?

$7,150,000

**The cost includes engineering, furniture, construction, land acquisition, and contingency in 2024 dollars. More information is on the following page.*

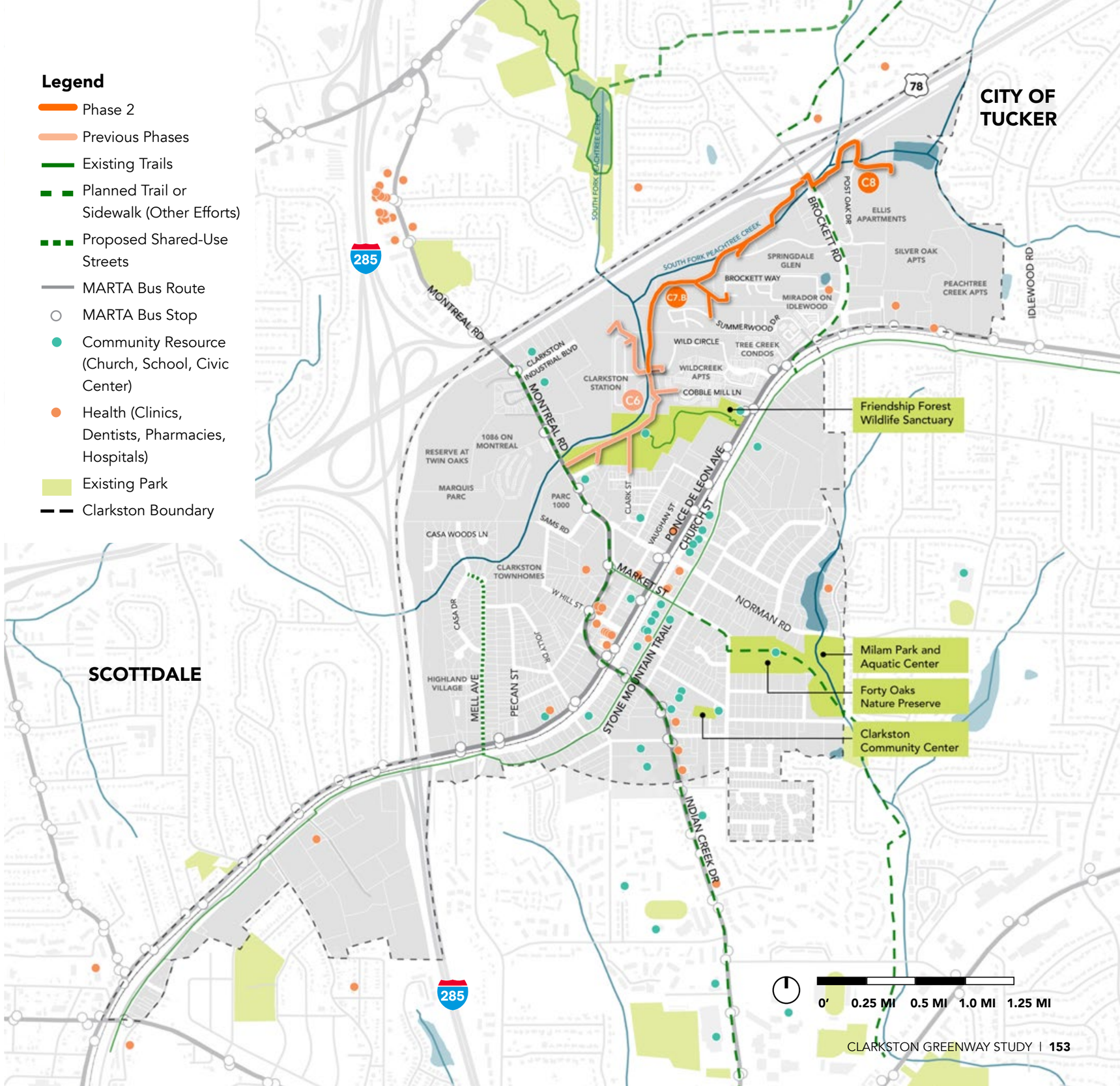


COST ESTIMATE

PHASE 2

Phase 2: Wild Circle Road to Brockett Road
(1.35 miles)

Segment	Description	Cost
C7 and C8	C7 begins at Wild Circle Road and follows the south side of the creek to Brockett Road. Trail connections are possible to multiple apartment complexes. One 125-foot bridge is required to cross to the north side of the creek to complete the connection to Brockett Road. C8 crosses Brockett Road at the traffic light and uses the existing crosswalk at the exit ramp of Highway 78, then heads northeast following a sewer easement to Post Oak Drive in the Ellis Apartments complex, then turns and follows Post Oak Drive for a short section as a shared-use street. Then, it crosses to the south side of the creek (requiring a 100-foot bridge), and ends at the clubhouse of Silver Oak Apartments. Trail connections are possible at Ellis Apartments and Silver Oak Apartments. Most of Phase 2 is within the floodway; clearing, drainage, and easements from property owners will be required (three for C7 and two for C8). It also includes bollards to protect the trail, bridges, and two pocket parks.	
	Engineering	$487,000
	ROW Acquisition	$1,430,000
	Construction	$4,300,000
	Contingency (15%)	$933,000
	Total	**$7,150,000**



PHASING & COST ESTIMATES

PHASE 3 (0.80 MILE)

Connecting neighborhoods to businesses in Downtown Clarkston

Phase 3 is comprised of segments C4 and C5 as shown on the image below and map on the next page. This segment connects to Phase 1 at Montreal Road and runs along the South Fork Peachtree Creek to Casa Drive and behind Thriftown, roughly 0.8 mile in length. It includes connections to Sams Road and West Hill Street, Thriftown, Casa Woods Lane, Parc 1000 Apartments, Marquis Parc Apartments, and 1086 on Montreal Apartments. This segment will better connect residents on the west side of the city to Downtown Clarkston and everywhere east of Montreal Road with a more direct route. A passive pocket park is recommended at 3489 Hill Street behind Thriftown (see page 130).

Between both segments of this phase, five easements will be required, two from single-family property owners, and others from adjacent apartment properties, which could delay implementation. Like Phase 2, the City of Clarkston has applied for Congressional District funding to pay for the surveying and engineering fees for this phase of the trail.

How Phase 3 can connect you in Clarkston

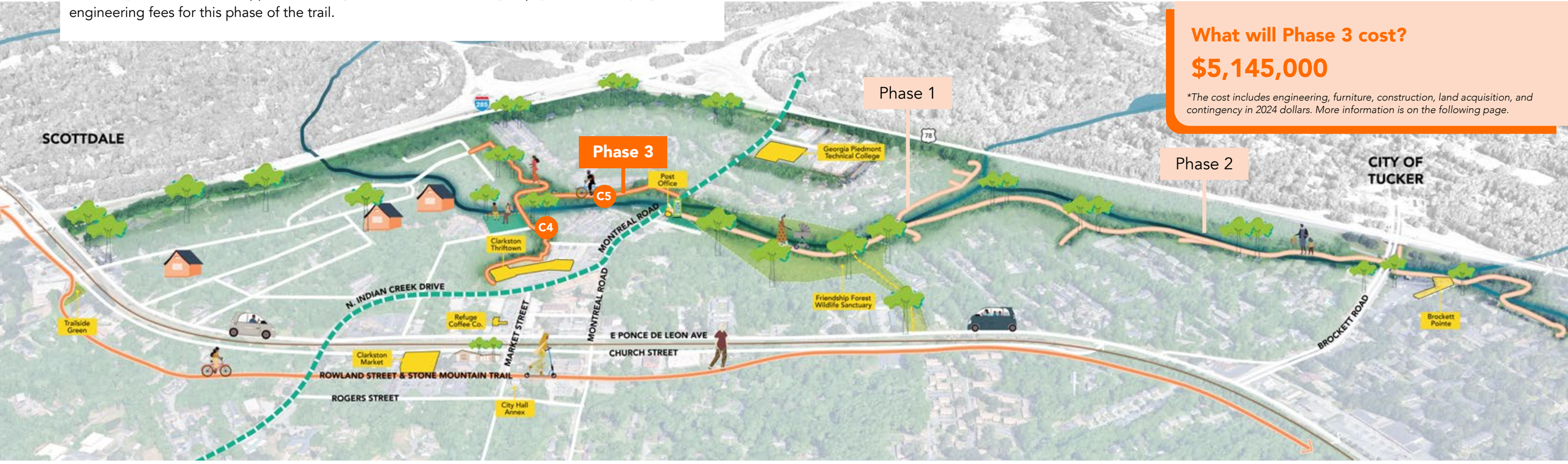
Phase 3: Montreal Road to Casa Woods Lane and Thriftown



What will Phase 3 cost?

$5,145,000

**The cost includes engineering, furniture, construction, land acquisition, and contingency in 2024 dollars. More information is on the following page.*

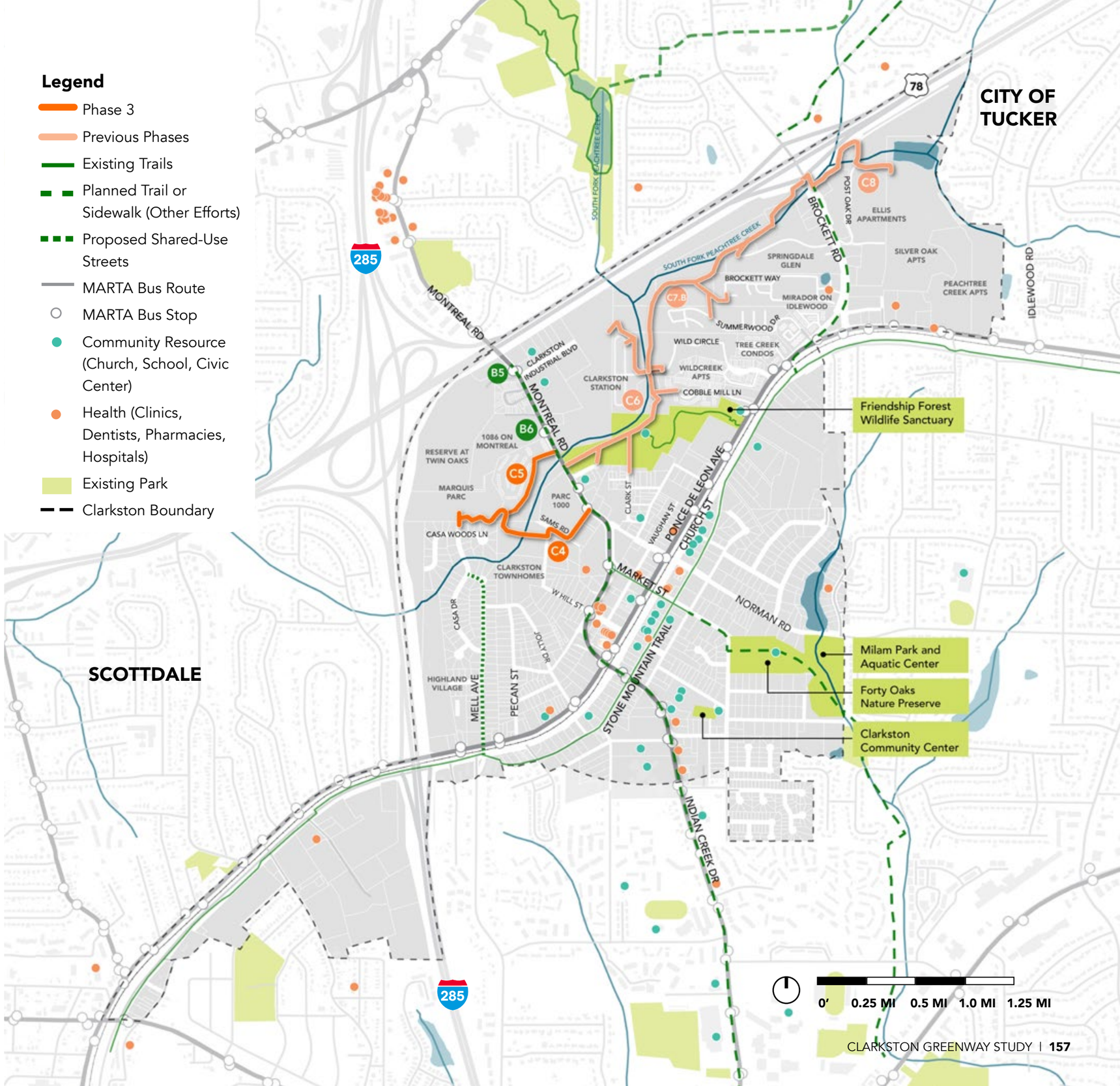


COST ESTIMATE

PHASE 3

Phase 3: Montreal Road to Thriftown and Casa Woods Lane (0.80 miles)

Segment	Description	Cost
C4 and C5	C4 begins at Casa Woods Lane and runs east along Marquis Parc Apartments to West Hill Street, then to Sams Road. Trail connections are possible to Casa Woods Lane, Marquis Parc Apartments, West Hill Street, Parc 1000 Apartments, Clarkston Townhomes, and Clarkston Station Shopping Center. Some clearing, drainage, retaining walls, curb and gutter, and a 100-foot bridge over the creek are needed. There are two perpendicular crossings at West Hill Street and Sams Road. Four easements are required from property owners for C4. C5 begins as a spur trail from C4 along the property line of Plantation Apartments to Montreal Road. Two easements, clearing, drainage, and two small bridges over unknown tributaries will be required for this segment.	
	Engineering	$370,000
	ROW Acquisition	$732,000
	Construction	$3,372,000
	Contingency (15%)	$671,000
	Total	**$5,145,000**



Chapter 5 | Implementation Plan

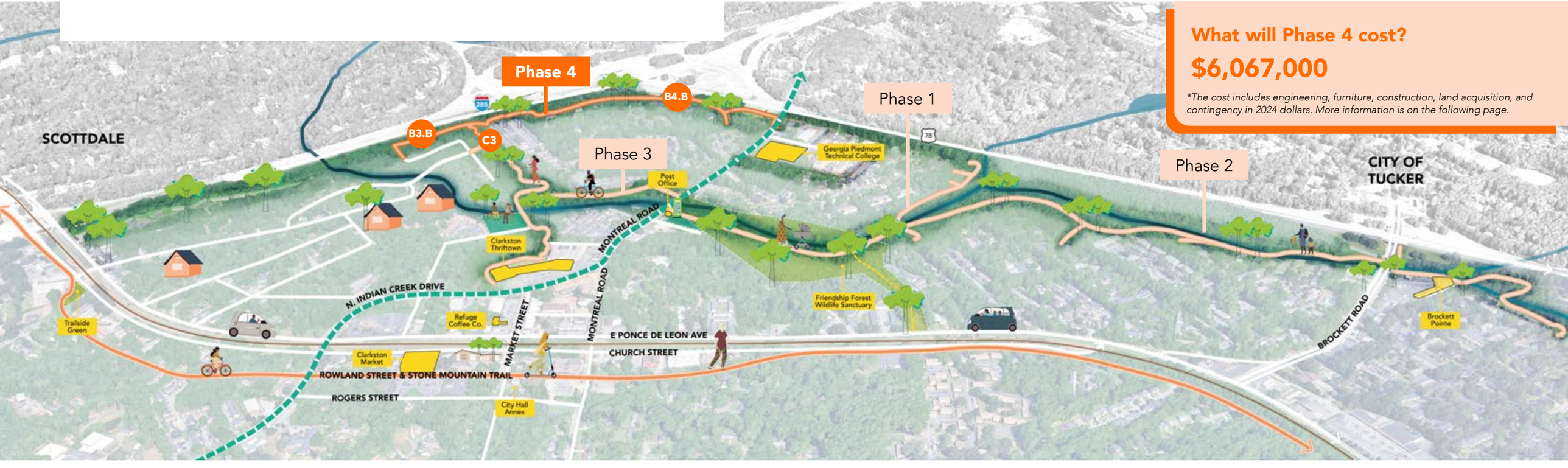
PHASING & COST ESTIMATES

PHASE 4 (1.0 MILE)

Creating a greenway on the edge of the city to connect apartments

Phase 4, which is about one mile in length, is comprised of segments C3, B3.B, and B4.B as shown in the image below and the map on the next page. This phase connects to Phase 3 behind Casa Woods Lane and runs along potential easements in apartment properties adjacent to I-285 to connect to Montreal Road where the street crosses over Highway 78.

This segment provides a secondary route for residents on the west side of the city to reach Montreal Road, Downtown Clarkston, and, with future phases, Ponce de Leon Avenue. This phase will also require an easement on the Marquis Parc Apartments property along the highway, but a lot of the land for B3 is owned by the City of Clarkston already. No funding for this or subsequent phases has been pursued or allocated at the writing of this report.



What will Phase 4 cost?

$6,067,000

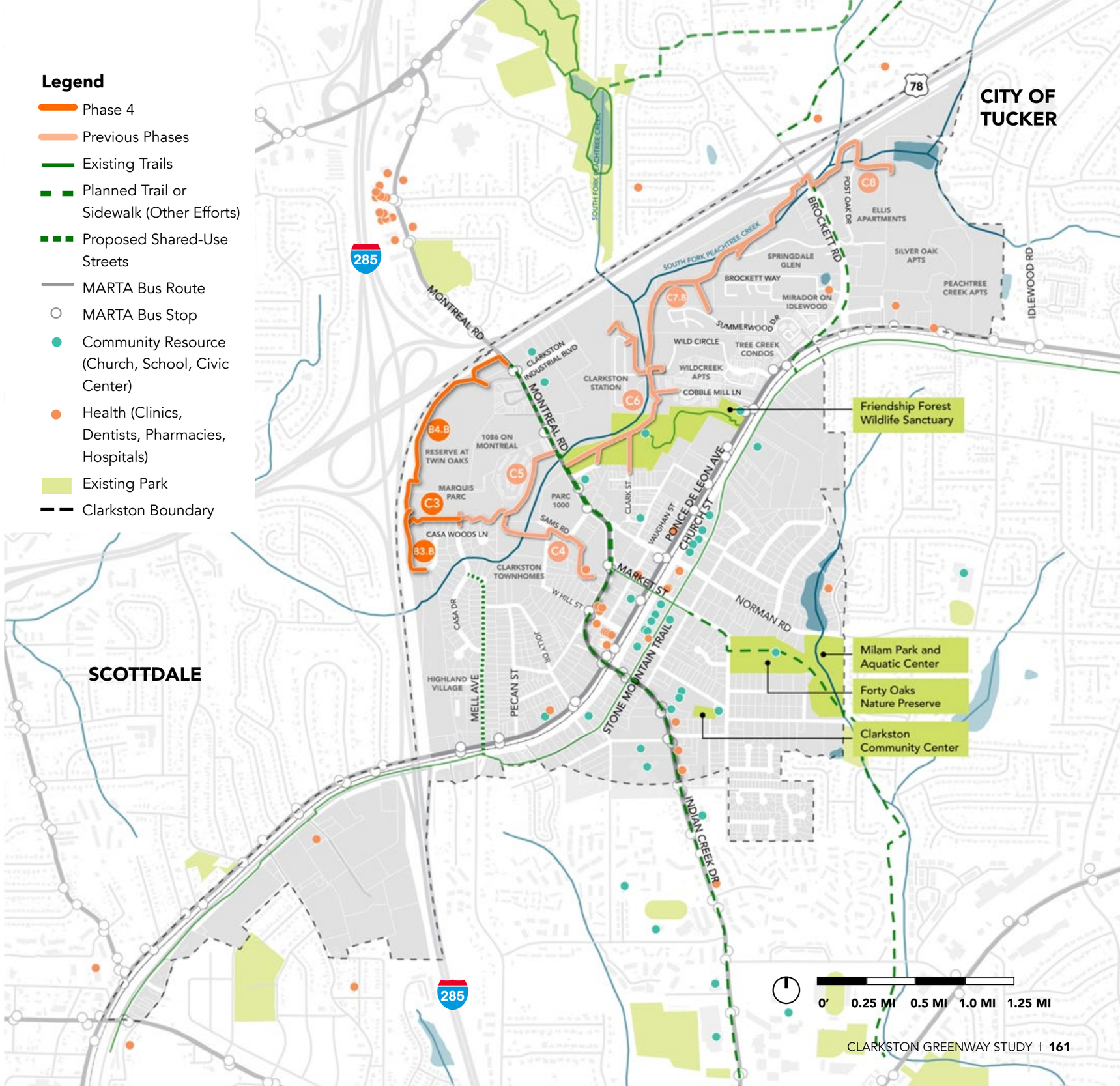
**The cost includes engineering, furniture, construction, land acquisition, and contingency in 2024 dollars. More information is on the following page.*

COST ESTIMATE

PHASE 4

Phase 4: Connecting Apartments in the Northwest to Montreal Road (1.0 mile)

Segment	Description	Cost
B3.B, B4.B C3	B3.B runs from Casa Woods Lane north to the Marquis Parc Apartments near I-285. This section will require clearing, drainage pipes for a tributary crossing, and a short wall to help grades. The City owns most of the properties, but one easement is required. C3 connects to B3.B from Casa Drive along Marquis Parc Apartments, which will require an easement from the apartment complex owner, clearing, drainage, a small bridge over a tributary, retaining walls, and decorative fencing to protect properties on both sides. B4.B meets C3 and runs along I-285 and Highway 78, connecting to Montreal Road. The grade is relatively flat with a few small walls needed, safety handrail, drainage pipe for unknown crossings, and potential decorative fencing to protect property owners. Short sections of chain-link fence are needed along the interstate, per Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements.	
	Engineering	$435,000
	ROW Acquisition	$921,000
	Construction	$3,920,000
	Contingency (15%)	$791,000
	Total	**$6,067,000**



PHASING & COST ESTIMATES

PHASE 5 (0.70 MILE)

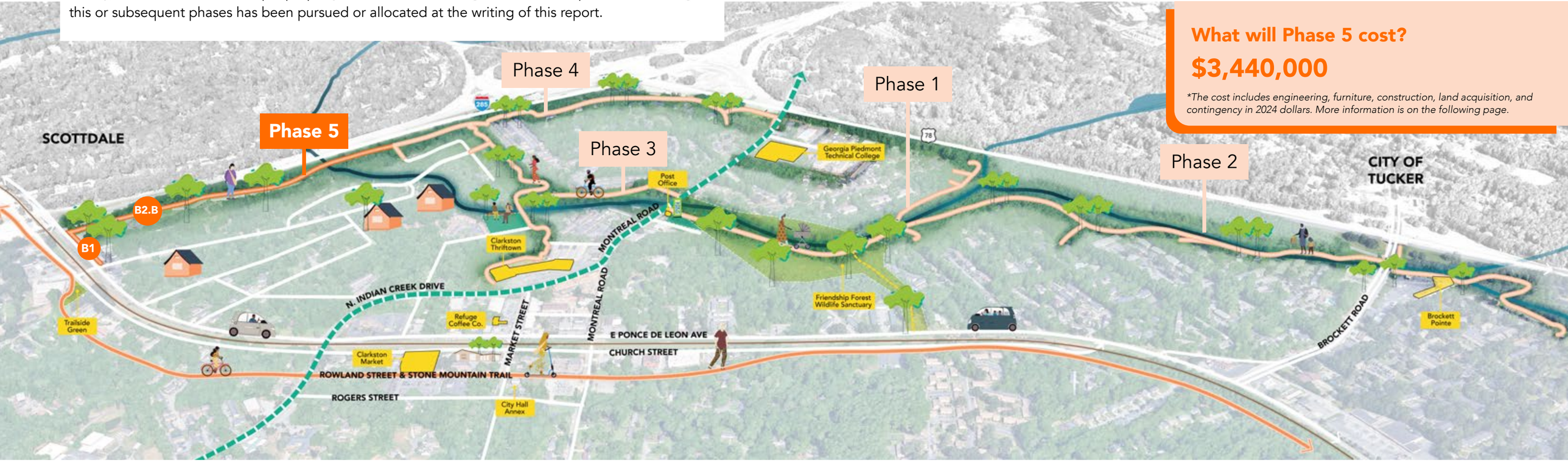
Connecting apartments to East Ponce de Leon Avenue

Phase 5, which is approximately 0.7 mile in length, is comprised of segments B1 and B2.B as shown in the image below and the map on the next page. This segment connects to Phase 4 at Casa Woods Lane and runs along a potential easement in the Highland Village apartment complex south to E. Ponce de Leon Avenue. To make the connection to the street, an additional easement may be needed on the Marathon gas station property. It also runs east on E. Ponce de Leon Avenue to Mell Avenue using the existing sidewalk as a connection with improvements to make the walking experience better. Improvements include wayfinding signs, lighting, and street trees.

This phase will provide an alternative connection to E. Ponce de Leon Avenue for apartment residents on the west side of the city. If the improvements cannot fit within the E. Ponce de Leon Avenue right-of-way, coordination with multiple property owners on the B1 segment will be required. No funding for this or subsequent phases has been pursued or allocated at the writing of this report.

Chapter 5 | Implementation Plan





What will Phase 5 cost?

$3,440,000

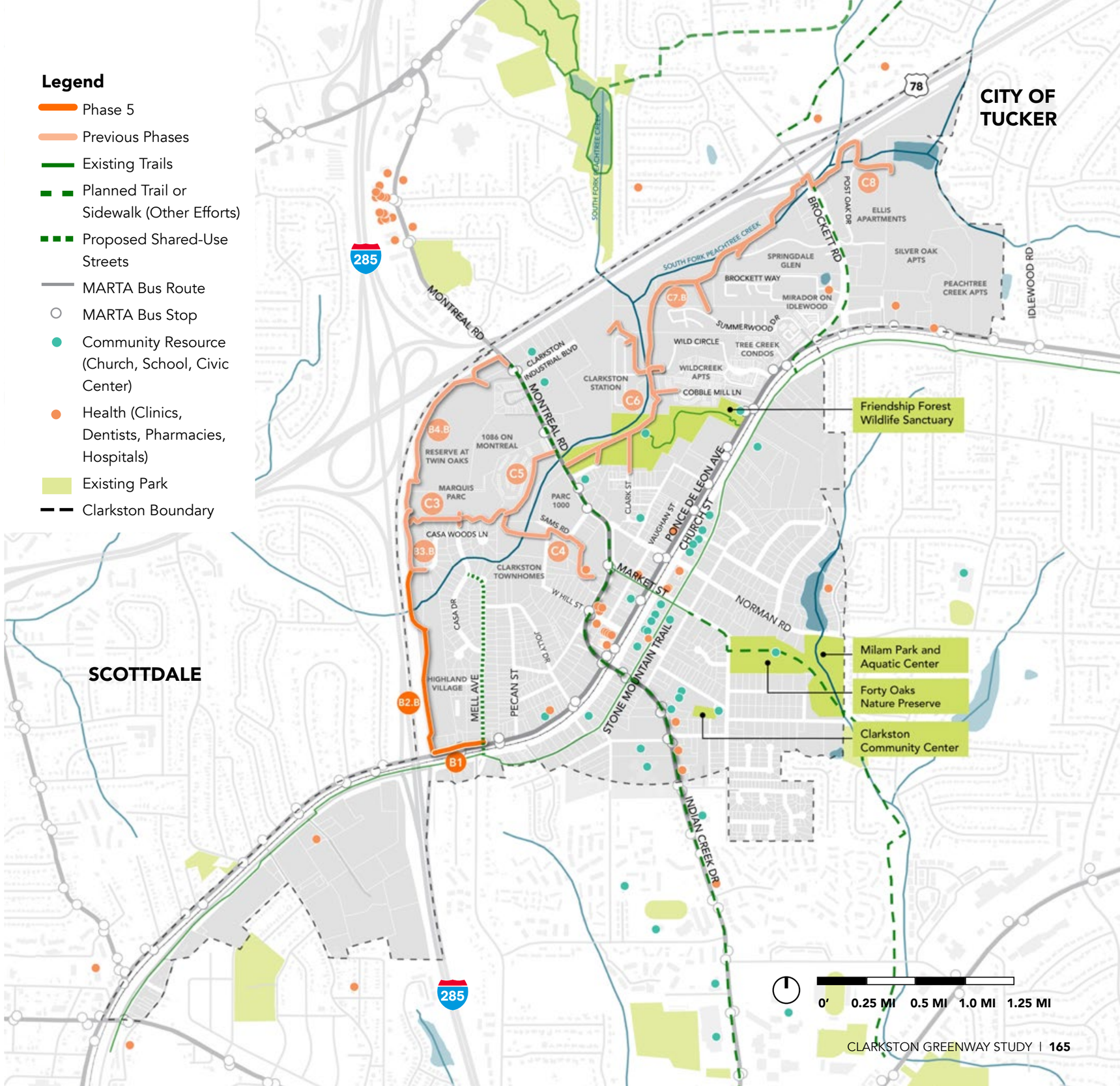
**The cost includes engineering, furniture, construction, land acquisition, and contingency in 2024 dollars. More information is on the following page.*

COST ESTIMATE

PHASE 5

Phase 5: Connecting Apartments in the Northwest to E. Ponce de Leon Avenue (0.70 miles)

Segment	Description	Cost
B1 and B2.B	B1 converts the existing 5-foot wide sidewalk to a 12-foot wide concrete trail. Easements and utility relocations are required on five properties. B2.B leaves E. Ponce de Leon Avenue near the on ramp to I-285 N for a short distance, then crosses over a drainage ditch with a pipe to easements along Pani Investments (Marathon Gas) and onto Highland Village apartments, connecting Casa Woods Lane. A portion of the trail will head up close to I-285 to utilize the exist culvert over South Fork Peachtree Creek. A retaining wall over the existing culvert will be required. This trail section will require clearing, drainage pipes for an unknown tributary crossing, and decorative fencing along property lines.	
	Engineering	$262,000
	ROW Acquisition	$402,000
	Construction	$2,326,000
	Contingency (15%)	$450,000
	Total	**$3,440,000**



PHASING & COST ESTIMATES

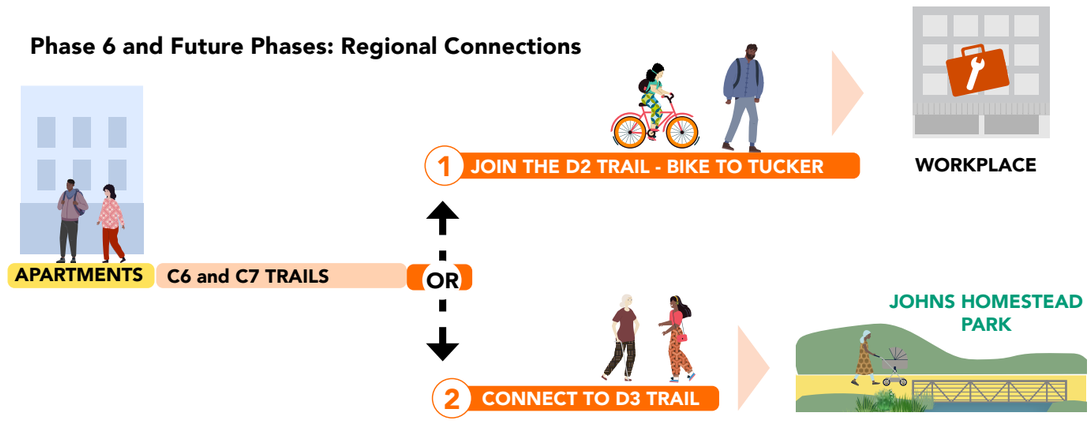
PHASE 6 (1.20 MILES)

Future greenway expansions for more local and regional connections

Phase 6 is comprised of segments A1, A2, and A3 as shown in the image below and the map on the next page. This segment connects to Phase 4 at Montreal Road and Phase 1 by the South Fork Peachtree Creek. These segments run along Highway 78 and behind Georgia Piedmont Technical College to provide alternative pedestrian and bike connections, further improving the walkability of the area.

This phase also includes long-term connections to Tucker under Highway 78 (D3) and on Brockett Road (D2); to Scottdale along E. Ponce de Leon Avenue (D1); and, to the Stone Mountain Trail across / under the railroad tracks, E. Ponce de Leon Avenue, and Church Street (D4); however, the cost estimates are not included in the table on page 168 because of many unknown factors. In Fall 2024, the City of Clarkston will re-apply for a Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant to study the connection under the railroad tracks to the Stone Mountain Trail and determine the cost to build it. No other funding has been pursued or allocated for these connections.

How future phases can connect you in Clarkston and beyond



What will Phase 6 cost?

$6,620,000

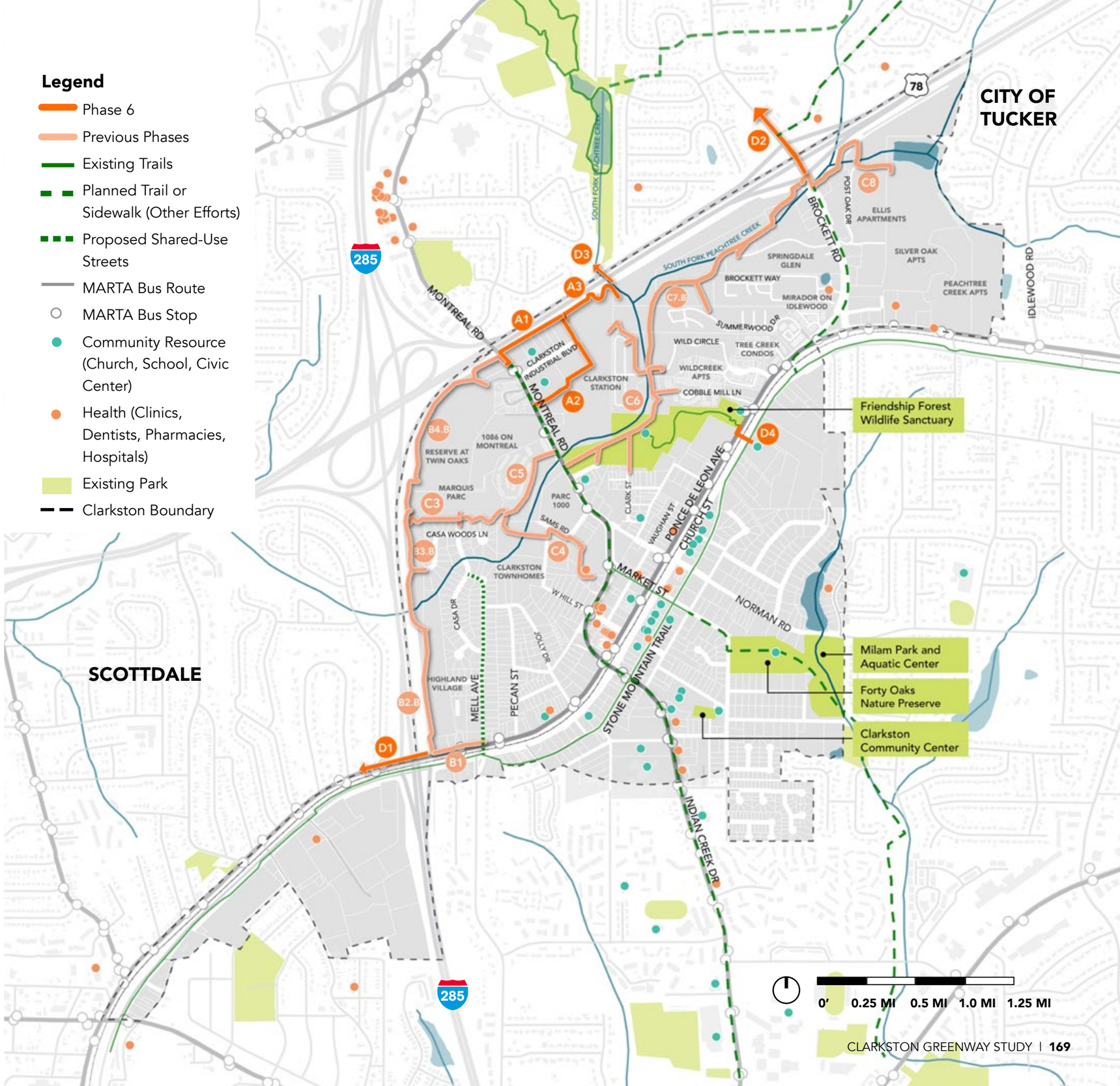
**The cost includes engineering, furniture, construction, land acquisition, and contingency in 2024 dollars. More information is on the following page.*

COST ESTIMATE

PHASES 6+

Phases 6+: Regional Connections (1.2 miles)

Segment	Description	Cost
A1, A2, and A3	A1 begins at and crosses Montreal Road near the MARTA bus stop with a HAWK beacon, then heads north along Montreal Road for a short distance and turns east and follows a berm between Highway 78 and a private property. Trail connections are possible to Debre Bisrat St. Gabriel, a day care, and Clarkston Station Apartments, but an easement is needed from one property. A2 begins on Montreal Road along the Georgia Piedmont Technical College property, runs east to Clarkston Station Apartments, and follows the edge of a wide parking lot that could be narrowed to make room for the trail. Then, it runs north along the same parking lot to section A1. A wall may be needed along the Almost Auto Services property. Trail connections are possible to Georgia Piedmont Technical College, Clarkston Station Apartments, Starnes Senior Residences, and Clarkston Industrial Boulevard. Two easements are needed for this segment. A3 runs along Highway 78 and heads south ending at Wild Creek Circle. The trail is steep in some sections; a switchback and a retaining wall will help with the grade. Trail connections are possible to Clarkston Station and Wild Creek Apartments, and two easements are needed. Some clearing, chain-link fence, and decorative fence will protect properties for all three segments.	
	Engineering	$467,000
	ROW Acquisition	$1,100,000
	Construction	$4,163,000
	Contingency (15%)	$890,000
	Total	**$6,620,000**



100-DAY ACTION PLAN

Immediate Implementation for Phases 1 to 3

The 100-Day Action Plan focuses on the steps to enable Phases 1 to 3. The City of Clarkston has already allocated funding for surveying, engineering, and ROW acquisition for Phase 1 in the DeKalb County SPLOST II and has started to find funding for the surveying and engineering tasks in Phases 2 and 3. However, there are other items within those phases that will require advance coordination, like easement agreements or ROW acquisition, starting partnerships with non-profits, and applying for grants that have deadlines in the next three to 12 months.

Concurrent with the actions listed to the right, the City of Clarkston will be working on the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) planning project on Montreal Road and N. Indian Creek Drive. This will require coordination between the planning and engineering teams because Phase 1 connects to Montreal Road next to the South Fork Peachtree Creek. It will be key to coordinate the HAWK signal placement, signage, streetscape improvements, and how the trail will interact and connect with the streetscape changes. On-going community engagement and communication, particularly with affected property owners, as the phases are implemented will be important to the success of building the Clarkston Greenway. Property owners should be kept informed of progress and should collaborate with the planning and engineering teams so that impacts on their properties are addressed.

T.1: Enabling Phase 1

Task	Description
Release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for surveying and engineering for Phase 1.	Determine timeline. Release the RFP in Fall 2024 and hire a firm to conduct the detailed engineering, to start in early 2025.
Start coordination with property owners.	Contact affected property owners along the Phase 1 route for easements or trail connections to apartment communities.
Review funding plan and determine which grants to pursue for construction funding in 2025.	Apply for grants and partner with a non-profit when needed.

T.2: Enabling Phases 2 and 3

Task	Description
Start coordination with property owners.	Contact affected property owners along the Phases 2 and 3 routes for easements or trail connections to apartment communities.
Apply for grants to fund engineering or implementation.	If not awarded Congressional District Funding, determine which grants the City should apply for and start the actions needed to apply.
Review funding plan and determine which grants to pursue.	Apply for grants and partner with a non-profit when needed.

Immediate Actions for Ongoing and Long-Term Efforts

Ongoing and long-term initiatives will support the implementation of the Clarkston Greenway over the implementation process, but some steps can be taken immediately to ensure momentum, resident quality of life, and the future success of the greenway.

Building Pocket Parks
A few pocket parks are proposed along the greenway at 1050 Vaughan Street (owned by the City), 3489 Hill Street, and 3520 Montreal Circle Court Road (owned by the City). The first step the City could take is to determine if it is strategic to purchase the 3489 Hill Street property now. If funds are available, they could purchase immediately. If funding is not available, the City could potentially apply for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship program or the Georgia Outdoor Recreational grant to help acquire the land and start the design process.

The City could also start the planning and design process for the other two properties by releasing an RFP, or by working with Park Pride or another parks-oriented agency.

Explore Housing Tools and Strategies
The City of Clarkston could explore housing tools such as a housing trust fund, a land trust, or collaboration with a land bank by initiating a housing study (project A.2) specific to addressing the need and challenges in Clarkston.

Establish a Partnership with a Non-profit
Many of the grants in the funding plan require partnership with a non-profit entity. The City could explore a "Friends of" group specifically for the greenway that could work with Park Pride to help with grant application eligibility.

Apply for Applicable Grants Due in 2024-2025
Some grants in the funding plan have deadlines by the end of 2024. If the City feels prepared to apply for grants in 2024, the following list should be highest priority:

- Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grants Program (administered by the EPA).
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources).
- Our Town grant (administered by the National Endowment for the Arts).
- Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grant to study the connection to the Stone Mountain Trail under the railroad tracks, across from Friendship Forest Wildlife Sanctuary.

If not ready in 2024 to apply for these grants, the City grants administrator should identify and prepare for grants due in 2025. Some have annual awards and could be prioritized.

Chapter 5 | Implementation Plan

FULL ACTION PLAN

Transportation and Trail Projects

Project #	Description	Type	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Sources	Timeline
T.1	**Enable Phase 1**: The City has allocated funding in the DeKalb County SPLOST II to pay for the surveying, engineering, and ROW acquisition in Phase 1, and the City will need to release an RFP for engineering design. The project engineer should coordinate with property owners along the route. The City grants administrator should review the funding plan to determine which grants to pursue for construction and / or apply for ARC implementation funds in 2025. This may involve partnering with a non-profit or setting one up (project P.1).	Trail / greenway	$200,000 engineering $294,000 right-of-way acquisition (ROW)	City of Clarkston, coordination with DeKalb County for floodway and sewer easement	DeKalb County SPLOST II	Immediate 2024
T.2	**Enable Phases 2 and 3**: The City has applied for Congressional District Funding for engineering fees for these phases. Along with T.1, the project engineer (once hired) should contact affected property owners along the segments for Phases 2 and 3, including DeKalb County because of the floodplains and sewer easement. If not awarded the Congressional District Funding, the City should determine grants to apply for and start the applications. This may involve partnering with a non-profit or setting one up (project P.1). The City will need to release an RFP for engineering design once funding is secured.	Trail / greenway	$487,000 engineering Phase 2 $370,000 engineering Phase 3 $1,430,000 ROW Phase 2 $732,000 ROW Phase 3	City of Clarkston, coordination with DeKalb County for floodway and sewer easement	Congressional District Funding and / or grants	Immediate 2024-2025
T.3	**Construct Phase 1:** Advertise an RFP and hire a construction firm to construct Phase 1 using construction documents from project T.1 and ensure funding is allocated for construction.	Trail / greenway	$2,200,000 construction $397,000 contingency	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP and / or other grants	2025-2026
T.4	**Construct Phase 2**: Advertise an RFP and hire a construction firm to construct Phase 2 using construction documents from project T.2 and ensure funding is allocated for construction.	Trail / greenway	$4,300,000 construction $933,000 contingency	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP and / or other grants	2026-2027
T.5	**Construct Phase 3**: Advertise an RFP and hire a construction firm to construct Phase 3 using construction documents from project T.2 and ensure funding is allocated for construction.	Trail / greenway	$3,372,000 construction $671,000 contingency	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP and / or other grants	2027-2028
T.6	**Enable and Construct Phase 4**: As with Tasks T.1 to T.5, the project engineer will need to coordinate with affected property owners along the route The City will need to find and allocate funding and release RFPs for design and construction.	Trail / greenway	$435,000 engineering $921,000 ROW $3,920,000 construction $791,000 contingency	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP and / or other grants; potential DeKalb County referendum for SPLOST III *(The City should add future phases if they are not planned for construction until 2030.)*	2028-2030
T.7	**Enable and Construct Phase 5**: As with Tasks T.1 to T.5, the project engineer will need to coordinate with affected property owners along the route. The City will need to find and allocate funding and release RFPs for design and construction.	Trail / greenway	$262,000 engineering $402,000 ROW $2,326,000 construction $450,000 contingency	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP and / or other grants; potential DeKalb County referendum for SPLOST III *(The City should add future phases if they are not planned for construction until 2030.)*	2030-2032
T.8a	**Enable and Construct Phase 6 (segments A1, A2, A3)**: As with Tasks T.1 to T.5, the project engineer will need to coordinate with affected property owners along the route. The City will need to find and allocate funding and release RFPs for design and construction.	Trail / greenway	$467,000 engineering $1,100,000 ROW $4,163,000 construction $791,000 contingency	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP and / or other grants; potential DeKalb County referendum for SPLOST III *(The City should add future phases if they are not planned for construction until 2030.)*	2032-2034

Chapter 5 | Implementation Plan

FULL ACTION PLAN

Transportation and Trail Projects

Project #	Description	Type	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Sources	Timeline
T.8.b	**Construct Phase 6+ (Regional Connections to Tucker)**: The City of Clarkston should coordinate with the City of Tucker to align route plans along Brockett Road and potentially under Highway 78. Both of these connections will require coordination with GDOT because of encroachment and construction around / on GDOT ROW.	Trail / greenway	TBD	City of Clarkston, City of Tucker, GDOT	ARC / TIP and / or other grants; potential DeKalb County referendum for SPLOST III *(The City should add future phases if they are not planned for construction until 2030.)*	2034-2036
T.8.c	**Construct Phase 6+ (Regional Connections to Scottdale)**: The City of Clarkston should coordinate with DeKalb County to design the route connections into Scottdale along Ponce de Leon Avenue. This connection will require coordination with GDOT because of encroachment and construction around / on GDOT ROW.	Trail / greenway	TBD	City of Clarkston, DeKalb County / community of Scottdale, GDOT	ARC / TIP and / or other grants; potential DeKalb County referendum for SPLOST III *(The City should add future phases if they are not planned for construction until 2030.)*	2034-2036
T.9	**RRFB and HAWK Signals on Montreal Road**: A HAWK signal is required where the trail in Phase 1 and Phase 4 and South Fork Peachtree Creek intersect Montreal Road. The placement should be coordinated with the upcoming conceptual planning for the Montreal Road / N. Indian Creek Drive road diet funded by the SS4A grant.	Safety improvement	Costs are part of project T.3 (Phase 1)	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP and / or other grants	2025-2026
T.10	**RRFB Signals on Brockett Road**: A crossing with a RRFB is required along Brockett Road to connect Phase 2 to the apartments and commercial centers east of Brockett Road.	Safety improvement	Costs are part of project T.4 (Phase 2)	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP and / or other grants	2026-2027
T.11	**RRFB Signals on Hill Street:** A crossing with a RRFB is required across Hill Street to connect Phase 3 to Montreal Road and Clarkston Village Shopping Center.	Safety improvement	Costs are part of project T.5 (Phase 2)	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP and / or other grants	2027-2028
T.12	**Wayfinding Study and Signage Design:** The City of Clarkston and Clarkston DDA should conduct a wayfinding study and design effort to determine where and what type of signs should placed along the Clarkston Greenway and throughout the city. The design should have a consistent design, be flexible for future changes, and be durable to reduce maintenance needs.	Wayfinding	$200,000 to $250,000 for Wayfinding Study TBD for Wayfinding Signage Design	City of Clarkston; Clarkston DDA	ARC / TIP and / or other grants	2026-2027 for Wayfinding Study

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FULL ACTION PLAN

Parks and Greenspace Projects

Project #	Description	Type	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Sources	Timeline
GS.1	**Build a Pocket Park at 3520 Montreal Circle Court Road:** The City owns this land. The City can solicit design and engineering firms to design the park site with the community. It could be constructed with Phase 1 of the trail (T.3).	Parks / greenspace	Design: $300,000 Construction: TBD	City of Clarkston, coordination with DeKalb County for floodway and sewer easement	General Fund; grants for parks	Immediate for design phases 2024
GS.2	**Build a Pocket Park at 1050 Vaughan Street:** The City owns this land. The City can solicit design and engineering firms to design the park site with the community.	Parks / greenspace	Design: $300,000 Construction: TBD	City of Clarkston	General Fund; grants for parks	Immediate for design phases 2024
GS.3	**Build a Pocket Park at 3489 Hill Street:** This property is under private ownership. The first step the City could take is to determine if it is strategic to purchase the 3489 Hill Street property now. If funds are available, they could purchase immediately. If not, the City could potentially apply for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship grant to help acquire the land and start the design process. This park could be built with Phase 3 of the trail (T.5).	Parks / greenspace	Land Acquisition: Fair Market Value Design: $300,000 Construction: TBD	City of Clarkston; coordination with DeKalb County for floodway and sewer easement	General Fund; grants for parks	2025
GS.4	**Encourage Community Gardens along the Trail:** The City can work with local organizations and the Clarkston Community Center to build and maintain community gardens along the trail.	Parks / greenspace	TBD	City of Clarkston, Clarkston Community Center	General Fund; grants	2026; Ongoing
GS.5	**Add Public Art Along the Greenway:** The City, the DDA, and Public Art Advisory Committee should collaborate on the curation, funding, and installation of public art along the trail. This should be a well-planned effort, supported by a Public Art Plan and regular funding source.	Parks / greenspace	$250,000 Public Art Plan TBD for individual art pieces	City of Clarkston, Clarkston DDA, Public Art Advisory Committee	General Fund; a potential public art fund; grants	2027; Ongoing

Partnerships and Funding

Project #	Description	Type	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Sources	Timeline
P.1	**Establish a Partnership with a Non-Profit:** The City could explore a "Friends of" group for the greenway to work with Park Pride to help with grant eligibility.	Partnership	Staff time and resources	City of Clarkston	General Fund	Immediate 2024
P.2	**Apply for Congressional District Funding**: The City of Clarkston has already applied for $1.6 million in Congressional District Funding from Senator Warnock's office. As of June 2024, the application has made the cut through the first round of qualifications. The City will be notified of the outcome in Fall 2024.	Funding	Staff time and resources	City of Clarkston	General Fund	Immediate 2024
P.3	**Apply for grants due in 2024 or 2025 for which the City is eligible**, such as: the Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grants Program (administered by the EPA), Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (administered by the GA DNR), Our Town grant (administered by the National Endowment for the Arts).	Funding	Staff time and resources; potential matches for grants (TBD by grant)	City of Clarkston	General Fund	2024-2025
P.4	**Track Grants in Funding Pipeline**: The City's grants administrator should track grants and eligibility in the funding pipeline provided in this report.	Funding	Staff time and resources	City of Clarkston	General Fund	Ongoing

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FULL ACTION PLAN

Policies Ensuring Long-Term Affordability

Project #	Description	Type	Cost	Responsible Party	Funding Sources	Timeline
A.1	**Explore the Creation of a Land Trust**: The City could meet with existing land trusts in the Atlanta region, like the Atlanta Land Trust and Decatur Land Trust, to understand if this is feasible. The land trust would help advance affordable housing goals. If infeasible, the City could also work with the Metro Atlanta Land Bank to hold and manage vacant or City-owned properties.	Policy and Organization Formation	Staff time and resources	City of Clarkston	General Fund for staff time; land trust would need to raise funds to support its goals	Immediate (2024) for determining if a land trust is desired
A.2	**Conduct a Citywide Housing Study:** The City of Clarkston should conduct a citywide housing study, which could build on the forthcoming DeKalb County CDAP process that will focus on housing and land use around the Stone Mountain Trail. The housing study should include a focus on affordable housing around the Clarkston Greenway.	Study	$300,000	City of Clarkston, Clarkston DDA	General Fund	2025-2026
A.3	**Use Tax Credits for Housing:** The City and / or the Clarkston DDA can work with property owners to access tax credits to improve apartment communities or build new apartment communities using tax credits, like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). The City may also benefit from a partnership with DeKalb County to access the funds.	Policy	Staff time and resources	City of Clarkston, Clarkston DDA, DeKalb County for a potential partnership	General Fund for staff time; DDA	Ongoing
A.3	**Encourage Rehabilitation of Existing Affordable Housing:** The City and Clarkston DDA can work with property owners to access an affordable housing fund, like the GoATL and TogetherATL housing funds from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta. The housing study (A.2) can also help determine which properties should be prioritized for rehabilitation.	Policy and Funding	Staff time and resources	City of Clarkston, Clarkston DDA	General Fund for staff time; DDA	Ongoing
A.4	**Establish an Anti-Displacement Fund:** The City could explore the creation of an anti-displacement fund that would help homeowners offset property tax increases. This could be created through public funds or philanthropic partnerships. The housing study (A.2) can also help determine the best way to establish and implement this fund.	Policy	Annual cost TBD through Housing Study (A.2)	City of Clarkston	ARC / TIP	2025
A.5	**Implement Renter Protections:** The City can help existing residents of apartment communities understand their rights when dealing with landlords and help with access to counsel through Atlanta Legal Aid. The housing study (A.2) can also help determine other ways to protect renters.	Policy	Staff time and resources	City of Clarkston; Atlanta Legal Aid	General Fund	Ongoing
A.6	**Update Zoning Ordinance with Affordable Housing Regulations:** The City may want to consider inclusionary zoning provisions citywide or for properties abutting the trail specifically.	Policy	Staff time and resources	City of Clarkston	General Fund	2027
A.7	**Support Small Businesses:** As noted in the Comprehensive Plan, the City and Clarkston DDA may want to create programs to support local businesses and microenterprises, particularly those along or near the greenway.	Policy and Program	TBD; depends on the type of program created	City of Clarkston, Clarkston DDA	General Fund; DDA	Ongoing

FUNDING PLAN

Many Options to Fund Implementation

Because of Clarkston's status as welcoming community for refugees and immigrants, and because of the number of public space improvements the greenway would incorporate, there are multiple ways to fund the Clarkston Greenway's implementation. The City can partner with a non-profit to apply for grants, access state and federal funding, apply for congressional district spending from the U.S. Senators' offices, contact philanthropic foundations, and contact other organizations with similar missions.

Partnering with a Non-Profit
While some corporate and private foundations may consider making a grant toward a "Qualified Government Agency under section 170 (c)(1)," they are more likely to require grants be made to a partnering 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Park Pride has a fiscal sponsorship program that may also be of use if this project would prefer to organize its own "Friends of the Park" group that could then work with Park Pride to accept tax-deductible donations from Foundations. https://parkpride.org/we-can-help/fiscal-sponsor/

State and Federal Funding
Many of the State and Federal grants provided have fast approaching deadlines and may not be attainable with such a short turn around. The grants listed are also only reflective of opportunities currently open for application. It is recommended that project fundraisers continue to regularly monitor Grants.Gov for new grant opportunities. A good resource is the Rails to Trails Conservancy website: https://www.railstotrails.org/policy/funding/ as well as this table from US Department of Transportation (updated last in 2023) https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/funding/funding_opportunities.pdf

Congressional District Spending
This project is a great fit for Georgia Senators' discretionary spending appropriations. A request has been made to Senator Warnock's office in 2024 for $1.6 million for engineering Phases 2 and 3. It is recommended that the City makes direct contact to both Senator Warnock's and Senator Ossoff's offices.

Contacting Foundations
Due to the nature of this project being led by local government agencies rather than a nonprofit, it is recommended that the City grants administrator reaches out to Corporate and Private Foundation representatives ahead of submitting applications in order to determine eligibility.

Additional Resources
It is recommended that the City make connections with Park Pride, PATH Foundation, and the Trust for Public Land staff to review the project and determine if there is any overlap or possibility for partnership or funding.

The following pages show a funding pipeline for government, corporate, and private foundations grants, and how eligible this project is for each opportunity.

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The City of Clarkston has already started finding and allocating funds for implementation:

1. **Current DeKalb County SPLOST II Budget**
   Phase 1
   Engineering and ROW Acquisition

2. **Applied for Congressional District Funding**
   Phases 2 and 3
   Engineering

3. **Applied for Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods Grant in 2023.**
   Will re-apply in 2024 funding cycle.
   Crossing under railroad tracks

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FUNDING PLAN

Government Grants and Funding

Source	Grant Name & Focus Area	Focus Area Details	Dates	Average Gift	Process and Notes	Eligibility
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	America the Beautiful Challenge Focus: Conservation and access	» Conserving and restoring rivers, coasts, wetlands, and watersheds » Conserving and restoring forests, grasslands and important ecosystems that serve as carbon sinks » Connecting and reconnecting wildlife corridors, large landscapes, watersheds, and seascapes » Improving ecosystem and community resilience to flooding, drought, and other climate-related threats » Expanding access to nature, particularly in under-served communities	Due: Estimated April 2025 (check for annual awards) Award Notification: Estimated November 2025		Required pre-proposal narrative, then application by invitation	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)	Cultural and Community Resilience program Focus: Climate, cultural heritage	The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Division of Preservation and Access is accepting applications for the Cultural and Community Resilience program. This program supports community-based efforts to address the impacts of climate change and COVID-19 by safeguarding cultural resources and fostering cultural resilience through identifying, documenting, and / or collecting cultural heritage and community experiences. The program prioritizes projects from disadvantaged communities in the United States or its jurisdictions, and NEH encourages applications that employ inclusive methodologies.	Due: Estimated deadlines in January and May 2025 (check for annual awards) Award Notification: August or December 2025	$150,000 Max	Online application	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation	WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Projects (EWRP) 2024 Focus: Water	EWRP provides funding for water conservation / efficiency projects, water management / infrastructure improvements, and river / watershed restoration projects and nature-based solutions that provide significant ecological benefits.	Due: Estimated June 2025 (check for annual awards)	$5,000,000	Online application	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
EPA	Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grants Program Focus: Conservation, climate	Environmental and climate justice activities to benefit disadvantaged communities through projects that reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity to address environmental and climate justice challenges. These place-based investments will be focused on community-driven initiatives to be responsive to community and stakeholder input.	Due: rolling applications until November 21, 2024	$10,000,000 - $20,000,000	Online application	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR)	Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Focus: Parks and trails	The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program is a grant and loan program administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and authorized by the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act. Program funds will be dispersed for the purpose of providing stewardship to state parks; state lands and wildlife management areas; to support local parks and trails; and to protect critical conservation lands.	Due: October 15, 2024 Award Notification: Summer 2025	$500,000 - $3,000,000	All eligible applicants must complete a pre-application online. Following the competitive pre-application phase, successful pre-applicants will be invited to complete a second level application. 25% match required (minimum), 2-year grant	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)

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Government Grants and Funding

Source	Grant Name & Focus Area	Focus Area Details	Dates	Average Gift	Process and Notes	Eligibility
Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Focus: Motorized and pedestrian trails	RTP is a federal grant program funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and administered by the GA DNR. RTP provides funding for trail construction, maintenance, and education.	Estimated April 2025 Award Notification: TBA	TBA	All eligible applicants must complete a pre-application online. Following the competitive pre-application phase, successful pre-applicants will be invited to complete a second level application. 20% match minimum required, two-year grant. Applicants may submit pre-applications for both the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program and Recreational Trails Program, but applications must be for separate projects.	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)	Our Town Focus: Creative placemaking, art	Our Town is the NEA's creative placemaking grants program. Through project-based funding, the program supports activities that integrate arts, culture, and design into local efforts that strengthen communities over the long term. Our Town projects engage a wide range of local stakeholders in efforts to advance local economic, physical, and / or social outcomes in communities. Competitive projects are responsive to unique local conditions, develop meaningful and substantive engagement in communities, center equity, advance artful lives, and lay the groundwork for long-term systems change.	Due: August 1, 2024 (annually in August) Award Notification: April 2025	$25,000-$150,000, with a required minimum nonfederal cost share/match equal to the grant amount.	Online application All applications are submitted by one organization and require at least one partner organization. The applicant / partner pair must include a non-profit organization and a local governmental or quasi-governmental entity. If neither of the partners is an arts, design, or cultural entity, then an additional arts, design, or cultural partner is also required.	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)	Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Focus: Pedestrian and bicycle facilities, Safe Routes to School	GDOT partners with the FHWA in facilitating and providing an opportunity for local governments to pursue non-traditional transportation related activities such as pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian streetscaping projects. The Transportation Alternatives Program improves the quality of life for citizens in communities across the state by providing local governments the means to pursue projects that might not otherwise be possible.	Due: Estimated February 2025 (annually) Annual awards		Online application Applicants must demonstrate the following: the project is financially feasible; capacity of providing required matching funds, completing the project and planning for its ongoing maintenance of required items; the Local Public Agency must be adequately staffed and suitably equipped to undertake and satisfactorily complete the project; the Local Public Agency must provide a full-time employee to be responsible for the project.	✗ Non-profit Organization ✗ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✗ Municipal Governments ✗ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
Office of the Secretary	Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program	This grant opportunity opened in July 2024 for the next three fiscal years.	Due: September 30, 2024	TBA	Online, federal application. The City of Clarkston should re-submit the Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods grant application for the pedestrian connection under the railroad tracks.	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)

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Government Grants and Funding

Source	Grant Name & Focus Area	Focus Area Details	Dates	Average Gift	Process and Notes	Eligibility
Office of the Secretary	Local and Regional Project Assistance Grants (RAISE)	This grant opportunity will open Fall 2024		TBA	Online, federal application Link to previous round NOFO	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
USDOT	Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) Focus: Walking, bicycling, planning and construction	The ATIIP projects will help improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of active transportation networks and communities; improve connectivity between active transportation modes and public transportation; enhance the resiliency of on- and off-road active transportation infrastructure and help protect the environment; and improve quality of life in disadvantaged communities through the delivery of connected active transportation networks and expanded mobility opportunities. The ATIIP grants will allow communities to identify, prioritize, and implement improvements to the largest barriers to safe, accessible, and equitable pedestrian and bicycle network connectivity through the development of infrastructure that will provide substantial additional opportunities for walking and bicycling. Eligible organizations will be able to create plans or implement active transportation networks that connect destinations within or between communities or create plans or implement an active transportation spine connecting two or more communities, metropolitan regions, or states. ATIIP also provides an opportunity for eligible organizations to enhance their overall transportation network by integrating active transportation facilities with transit services, where available, to improve access to public transportation.	Due: June 17, 2024 (check for annual awards; TBD if offered in 2025) Award Notification: TBA	$100,000 - $15,000,000	Online, federal application Awardees must provide at least a 20 percent matching share of the total project cost. The total project cost consists of the total Federal share, matching funds, and any additional non-ATIIP federal funds that are not eligible for match. Other federal funds may be used as matching funds, but only if specifically allowed by statute. For projects serving communities with a poverty rate of over 40 percent based on the majority of census tracts served by the project, the federal share is 100 percent of the total project cost.	✗ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✗ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✗ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife	Invasive Species Eradication Funding Focus: Invasive species	Funds may be used to eradicate invasive plants or animals (avian, terrestrial, amphibious, or aquatic invasive species) affecting terrestrial or aquatic habitats (aquatic habitats include freshwater, wetland, riparian, estuarian, and marine). Invasive species targeted for eradication should be within the scope of DOI's mission. Projects submitted for consideration should result in eradication of the targeted species from a defined location or support research and development that advances achieving an eradication outcome. Priority will be given to projects that will achieve eradication from a defined area within three years. Proposed projects should have eradication of a specific invasive species or group of invasive species as its goal, not maximum control of the target invasive species.	Due: Estimated May 2025 (check for annual awards)	$50,000 - $1,000,000	Online, federal application No cost sharing or match requirement. This could be helpful for greenway routes along the South Fork Peachtree Creek that will require removal of kudzu and other invasive species.	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)

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Corporate Grants and Funding

Source	Grant Name & Focus Area	Focus Area Details	Dates	Average Gift	Process and Notes	Eligibility
Play and Park Structures	Healthy Kids Initiative Focus: Playground equipment donation	The Healthy Kids Initiative is designed to support the building of new playgrounds or updating existing playgrounds across the country by offering additional funding to expand your budget.	Due: June 28, 2024 (check for annual awards) Award Notification: 1-2 months	Equipment	Online application Funding applies to structures only. Product lines include: SuperMax, Duramax, Parallax, Totmax, Boulderscapes, Horizons, and Skyline. Cannot be combined with other offers. Applications must be received by June 28, 2024. Qualified customers will receive a Play & Park Structures certificate valid until September 29, 2024. Orders must be available for immediate shipment. Price does not include tax, freight, surfacing, or installation.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments X "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation (FTPF)	FTPF Orchard Focus: Fruiting tree donation	This grant supports the planting of fruitful trees and plants to alleviate hunger, combat global warming, strengthen communities and improve the surrounding environment. Trees can be planted at community gardens, city and state parks, in low-income neighborhoods, Native American reservations, schools, and other locations where they will serve the greater community.	Rolling	An approximate minimum is around 15-20 trees	Online application The Foundation provides high-quality trees and shrubs, equipment, on-site orchard design expertise and oversight, horticultural workshops, and aftercare training and manuals.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments X "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
Bank of America Foundation	Economic mobility focused on the needs of the community Focus: Parks and trails	Neighborhood Revitalization: Vibrant communities are places where individuals can thrive and succeed and have the opportunity to live and work with safe, decent housing, transportation to jobs, strong business corridors and thriving arts and culture districts. We support local and regional revitalization efforts, taking a holistic approach to building inclusive communities, creating economic opportunity and livable neighborhoods. Environmental efforts through the preservation, creation or restoration of open space, parks and community gardens.	Due: May 27 to June 21, 2024 (check for annual awards)		Online application May require a non-profit or fiscally-sponsored partner	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
Wells Fargo Foundation	General grant program Focus: General community impact	We provide grants to nonprofit organizations working to strengthen the resiliency of our communities and our planet with a focus on supporting nonprofits that strategically align with our funding priorities: financial health, housing affordability, small business growth, and sustainability. We prioritize funding to activities and programs that have a broad reach and support the needs of under-served communities and advancing racial equity.	Rolling		Online application May require a nonprofit or fiscally sponsored partner. Also favor projects that could provide a volunteering opportunity for employees.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)

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Corporate Grants and Funding

Source	Grant Name & Focus Area	Focus Area Details	Dates	Average Gift	Process and Notes	Eligibility
Georgia Power Foundation	General grant program Focus: General community impact, water	Georgia Power focuses on supporting causes contributing to the well-being of the communities we serve.	Due: May, August, and December Award Notification: 3 months after application	$50,000+	Invitation required. Contact must be made to your local staff person, Andrea Sieber (arsieber@southernco.com), for an invitation to apply.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
James M. Cox Foundation	General grant program Focus: Conservation and environment	Requests for capital campaigns (e.g., building construction, renovation, or equipment). Requests for special projects (e.g., program expansion or capacity-building efforts).	Due: February 15, June 15, and October 15 Award Notification: 3 months after application	$1,000,000+	Online application. May require a nonprofit partner.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments X "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
The Home Depot Foundation	General grant program Focus: Parks	Veterans. See notes column.	Rolling	$500,000+	Invitation required. Contact staff here: https://corporate.homedepot.com/page/foundation-leadership. The Home Depot Foundation does not have a stated area that clearly overlaps with this project; however, they are a major supporter of Park Pride and may be worth a conversation.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments X "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
AARP	Community Challenge Focus: Public places, mobility	The AARP Community Challenge provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. Some include: » Creating vibrant public places that improve open spaces, parks, and access to other amenities; » Delivering a range of transportation and mobility options that increase connectivity, walkability, bikeability, and access to public and private transit.	2025 application TBA	<$50,000	These are relatively small grants for projects that must be completed within one year. This would be a good fit for a discrete portion of the project, such as purchase and installation of benches along the trail.	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)

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Private Foundations

Source	Focus Area	Focus Area Details	Dates	Average Gift	Process and Notes	Eligibility
J. Bulow Campbell	Public Spaces	The Foundation focuses on organizations in Atlanta and Georgia, but it also can consider grants to those in the five surrounding states. It meets quarterly and awards most of its grants for capital purposes within the areas of education, youth development, human services, public spaces, and cultural institutions.	Due: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 Award Notification: 1 to 2 months after application	$500,000+	Recommend reaching out to foundation staff. May need a nonprofit partner.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments X "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
Woodruff Foundation	Parks	» Large-scale conservation projects » Significant public/private efforts to promote good stewardship of Georgia's natural resources » Support of the Park Pride Legacy Grant program for public parks and greenspaces in Atlanta	Due: February 1, August 15 Award Notification: 1 to 2 months after application	$500,000+	The Woodruff Foundation is one of four major Foundations managed within the same office. Contact with their staff may lead to consideration by their other funds as well.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments X "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
The Waterfall Foundation	Community beautification	Community beautification, parks, and youth	N/A	$50,000+	This fund is managed by the Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta. The donor prefers to stay behind the scenes but has made significant contributions to Park Pride and other parks and greenspace projects.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments X "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
Fraser-Parker Foundation	Environment, Sports and Recreation	Funder of Trust for Public Land, Trees Atlanta, and various greenspace projects.	N/A	$100,000+	This foundation does not have a website and prefers to stay under the radar, funding large projects and capital campaigns.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments X "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
Park Pride	Capital improvements	Awards are available for capital improvements that include (but are not limited to) amenities such as: new playgrounds, bridges and piers, ADA-accessibility upgrades, kiosks and signage, walking paths or trails, exercise equipment, community gardens, green infrastructure (rain gardens or bioswales), art installations, and more.	Rolling	$250-$100,000+	Required to be a Friend of the Park or 501c3 organization.	✓ Non-profit Organization X State Government Agencies X Local Governments X Municipal Governments X "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)

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Private Foundations

Source	Focus Area	Focus Area Details	Dates	Average Gift	Process and Notes	Eligibility
Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC	Trails	Project should support one or more of the following strategies in the TrailNation Playbook listed below. » Project Vision (e.g. developing a local or regional vision) » Coalition Building (e.g. cultivating stakeholder and political support) » Gap-filling Strategy (e.g. acquisition strategies) » Mapping and Analytics (e.g. mapping the network, equitable connectivity analysis) » Investment Strategy (e.g. securing matching funds, identifying, and pursuing funding opportunities) » Engagement (e.g. inclusive community engagement, user activation, and events) » The project must serve or plan to serve multiple user types (e.g., bicycling, walking / hiking or horseback riding) and be considered a rail-trail, greenway, multi-use trail or shared-use path.	Due: June 9, 2024 (check for annual applications) Award Notification: Fall	$5,000 - $25,000	For this round of funding, projects must be initiated by September 2025. To apply for a grant—all applicants must register to join RTC's TrailNation Collaborative. Registration is free and only requires an email address. Collaborative members have access to free webinars and monthly newsletters.	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)
PeopleForBikes	Bike trails	The PeopleForBikes Industry Community Grant Program provides funding for projects that make bicycling better in communities across the U.S. Since 1999, PeopleForBikes has awarded more than 400 grants to nonprofit organizations and local governments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Our investments total more than $3.5 million and have leveraged $775 million in public and private funding for bike-related projects nationwide.	October 11, 2024		The next round of PeopleForBikes Industry Community Grant Program opens on September 1, 2024. Applicants can submit a Letter of Interest through a form on this website until October 11, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. PT.	✓ Non-profit Organization ✓ State Government Agencies ✓ Local Governments ✓ Municipal Governments ✓ "Qualified Government Agency" under section 170(c)(1)



"Yes! A million times yes. Down the creek, connecting the neighborhoods!"

Comment received on the online activities, accessible on the project website

CITY OF CLARKSTON

Atlanta Regional Commission

LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE LCI

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