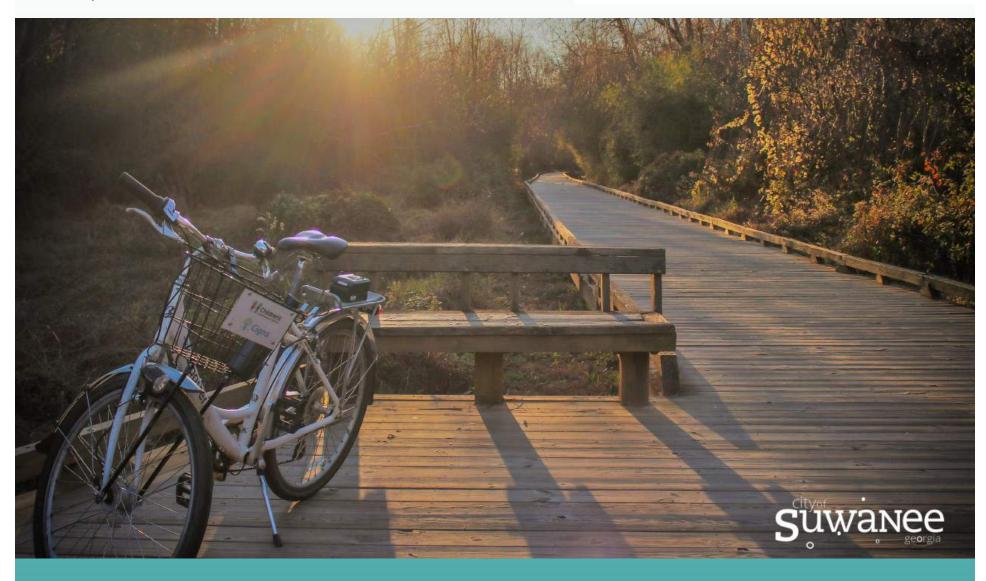
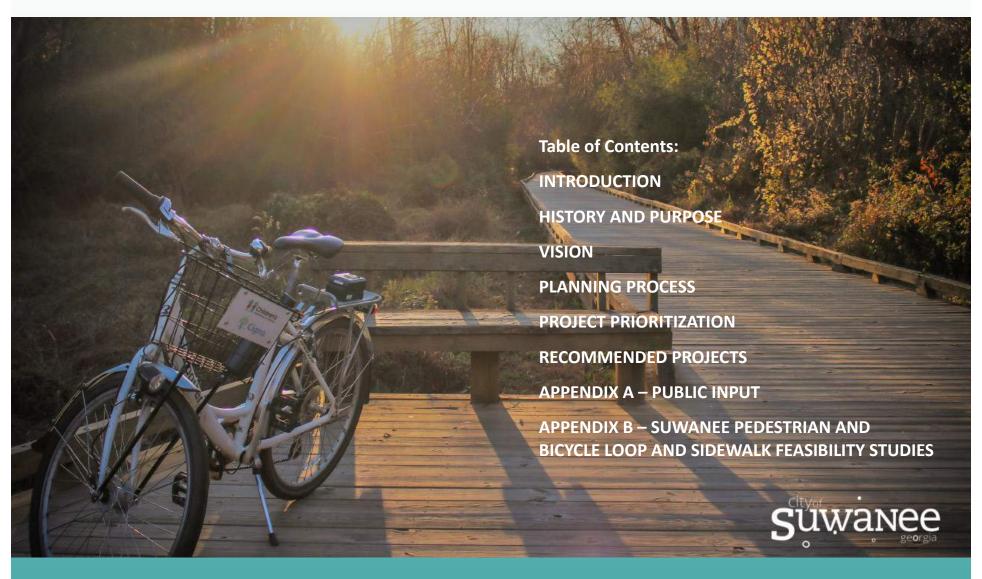


2022 Update



2022 Update



2022 Update



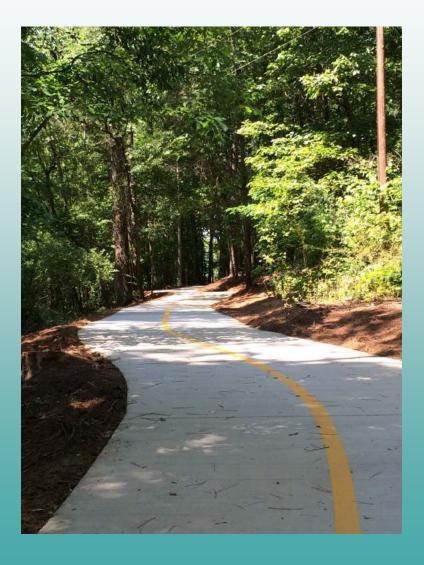
#### INTRODUCTION

This Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan update is intended to address new projects, evaluate the current need for previously recommended projects, and prioritize recommended projects for implementation over time. This plan: 1) lays out the vision for Suwanee as a walkable and bikable city; 2) details the process of identifying and prioritizing pedestrian and bicycle projects with citizen input, cost estimates, and feasibility studies; and 3) provides a list of recommended projects. This included significant public outreach documented in Appendix A.

#### HISTORY AND PURPOSE

The City adopted its first Alternate Modes Transportation Plan in 1998. That plan analyzed existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the City and identified potential projects. The City subsequently adopted updates to the plan in 2006 and 2011. In 2011, the City renamed the plan the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. Since then, the City has successfully implemented many of the projects including sidewalks, sharrows, and miles of greenway and multi-use trails. This document serves as an update to these efforts.

Provided herein is a guide for prioritization and implementation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities to make Suwanee more walkable and bikeable. An update to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan is needed periodically to incorporate evolving needs and emerging opportunities that develop as Suwanee changes over time. The update is a time to consider new projects and to determine how to prioritize those projects along with previously identified projects.



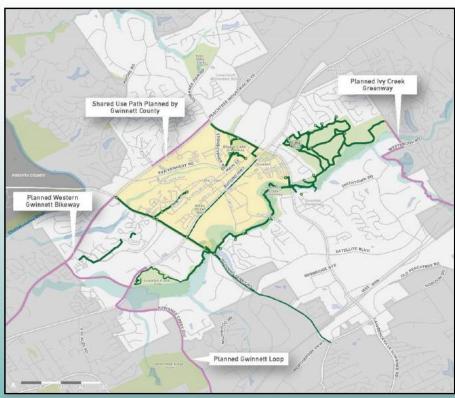
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#### **VISION**

The City of Suwanee is known for Town Center and miles of multi-use trails including the Suwanee Creek Greenway. Suwanee Creek Greenway and public art are integral parts of the City's identity and quality of life. The City aspires to enhance and strengthen this identity by expanding and improving Suwanee's multi-use trail system to create a continuous, branded, pedestrian and bicycle loop that connects more Suwanee neighborhoods to the Suwanee Creek Greenway and downtown Suwanee and connects Suwanee's downtown to planned regional trails (the Western Gwinnett Pathway, the Gwinnett Loop, and the Ivy Creek Greenway). This loop route will incorporate and connect iconic placemaking elements of the City including the Suwanee Creek Greenway, Town Center Park, Buford Highway, and Town Center on Main. This vision is consistent with the goals of the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*.

## Goals of the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*:

- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections from residential areas to Town Center and Old Town Suwanee
- Provide expansive loops for bicycle travel



Map of existing trails and planned county trails (Suwanee Pedestrian and Bicycle Loop and Sidewalk Feasibility Studies)

- Improve safety of pedestrians and bicycles crossing Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and other areas with heavy traffic
- Implement projects that improve the system

# "Art, parks, greenways and open space will be important elements for recreation and identity" (2040 Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement).

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement encompasses adopted city policies that will guide the growth of the City over the next 20 years. The first two sentences of the Vision Statement incorporate the goals of the *Pedestrian and Bicycle* Plan.

"Suwanee 2040 will be a safe, fun, attractive, inclusive, evolving city with a unique, vibrant downtown that is wellconnected to established neighborhoods and commercial/ employment opportunities. Neighborhoods farther from downtown will be largely suburban, while development types closer to downtown will be taller, denser and highly walkable."

### - 2040 Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

The Vision Statement promotes infrastructure improvements that connect neighborhoods to Suwanee's downtown. These connections are considered system improvements that improve the citywide pedestrian network rather than individual neighborhood or development sidewalks. These include pedestrian and bicycle networks on arterial roads, local connector roads that serve multiple neighborhoods, greenways that run throughout the City, and sidewalks and trails in city parks that are accessible to all residents.

In keeping with the City's vision, pedestrian facilities should be safe and attractive. Pedestrian networks that are designed to provide physical and psychological separation from vehicular traffic provide safety for pedestrians. Other design element such as street trees can provide a feeling of separation between vehicles and pedestrians as well as more enticing places to walk. Street trees create shade and more attractive environments for pedestrians and drivers that use the streets.

Speeding vehicles are often cited as obstacles to walkability. STOP signs are often requested to address speeding vehicles, but STOP signs used to interrupt the normal flow of traffic are not always the best solution. Where STOP signs are installed as "speed breakers," research shows that there are corresponding negative consequences to both speed and overall community safety. The City addresses this obstacle of speeding vehicles by embracing traffic calming measures to increase pedestrian safety by reducing vehicular speeding.

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Road design can make it uncomfortable for drivers to speed. Traffic calming measures include narrow streets as well as on-street parking and street trees. These elements make roads feel narrower, which makes drivers instinctively drive slower.

The Vision Statement states that Suwanee 2040 should also be inclusive. For pedestrian facilities, this means upgrading key intersection crossings to be safer for the visually impaired. Accessible pedestrian signals (APS) include auditory signals in addition to visual signals that have been shown to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

Other city policies support the goal of Suwanee as an increasingly walkable city. The City's land use policy encourages mixed-use environments for higher density residential projects with strong pedestrian connections to non-residential uses. The denser a project is the more important pedestrian connections to the surrounding area are and the more important walkability within the project becomes.

The City's land use policy and development regulations help implement the City's vision for a continuous pedestrian network connecting neighborhoods and new development to downtown Suwanee. New development and redevelopment projects include sidewalks along roads, and new buildings should have sidewalks that connect to the sidewalk system. Sidewalks are usually required to be separated from vehicular traffic with a planting strip with street trees making streets more comfortable for walking, and additional traffic calming elements such as narrow roads and on-street parking are encouraged to make it safer for walking and biking.



Village Grove is an example of a walkable neighborhood that was designed with traffic calming elements.

"Biggest obstacle to walking and biking is crossing PIB."\*

"Make sure all parks are linked."\*

"Lowering speeds would make Suwanee more foot/bike friendly."\*

#### **PROCESS**

Suwanee updated the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan to examine additional project needs, refine previously recommended projects, update cost estimates, and prioritize and group projects into implementation tiers. The process began with an inventory of existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities; stakeholder interviews with City Council and members of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals; and a public open house to discuss existing conditions, confirm the need of projects in the existing plan, and identify new desired pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

A public open house with over 50 attendees kicked off the update process in August 2019. Participants had an opportunity to view maps of existing conditions and discuss potential future pedestrian and bicycle projects with the City's planning staff. A written questionnaire was also given to those that attended for further input. The results of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.



Public Open House—August 7, 2019

During this initial phase of the update, several potential projects and issues were identified. Residents expressed a love for Suwanee's trails and a desire for the Suwanee Creek Greenway to connect to other trails to create of a loop for biking and walking. Other residents expressed a desire for several new sidewalks in the Old Town area to make it more walkable. Many voiced concerns about the challenge of crossing Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.

Based on the input received, a potential list of projects to be included in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan update was developed including new desired projects that came out of the public input and projects that had long been in the *Pedestrian* and Bicycle Plan but had not yet been implemented.

It was determined that a feasibility study was needed for some of the potential new projects that are likely to be more expensive and impactful to the character of the area than a typical sidewalk project before finalizing the list of projects to include in the update. The purpose of the feasibility study was to ensure that accurate cost estimates and potential impacts to the character of project areas were considered before recommending the projects for inclusion in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.

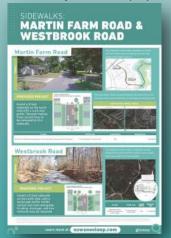
<sup>\*</sup>Sample of Comments from August 7, 2019 Public Open House

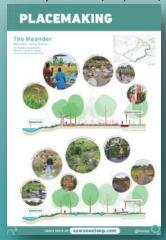
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In 2020 prior to the adoption of the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*, the City applied for a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to fund the feasibility study. The City received a grant to undertake the study, which consisted of three key components:

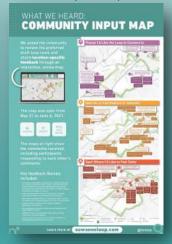
- 1) Create a concept plan for a continuous multi-use path around Suwanee with connections to the Suwanee Creek Greenway, downtown Suwanee, and other regional trails;
- 2) Explore creative solutions for crossing Peachtree Industrial Boulevard including potential improvements to the existing intersection of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Suwanee Dam Road; and
- 3) In order to provide more informed recommendations, develop cost estimates and impact analyses for sidewalk projects on the following key streets that would connect to the loop network: 1) Martin Farm Road from Suwanee Creek Greenway to Buford Highway; 2) Russell Street from Main Street to Buford Highway; 3) White Street from White Street Park to Russell Street; and 4) Westbrook Road from Smithtown Road to the planned Ivy Creek Greenway.

Selection of Boards Displayed at a Public Open House, July 2021, at the Conclusion of the Suwanee Pedestrian and Bicycle Loop and Sidewalk Feasibility Studies











## "Absolutely love the idea of a grade separated crossing across PIB."\*

# "Incorporate White Street more and connect it to the main arteries."\*

## "Connect Martin Farm Road to the new sidewalk on Buford Highway."\*

Public input opportunities for the Loop Study were provided at two events during the study. The first was a community engagement event in May of 2021 held along the Suwanee Creek Greenway in Martin Farm Park and at Harvest Farm in White Street Park. The community was asked for feedback on potential loop routes and sidewalk projects on Martin Farm Road and White Street. The second took place at a public open house at City Hall in July 2021 where the findings and recommendations of the study were shared. A parallel on-line survey on the project website, Suwaneeloop.com, was also used to gather public input, and an advisory committee met three times during the study to discuss feedback received during the process. This advisory committee included residents from different parts of the City including streets considered for new projects (Martin Farm Road, White Street, Westbrook Road, Main Street, and Scales Road) as well as a member of the Big Peach running club and the owners of Suwanee Creek Bicycles.



Pop-up Booth in Martin Farm Park, May 1, 2021

The City selected Toole Design Group, a planning firm that specializes in design of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, to perform the three point study called the *Suwanee Pedestrian and Bicycle Loop and Sidewalk Feasibility Studies*. The results of the study were used to make informed recommendations for the new projects included in the update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. These recommendations include:

- 1. A selected loop route broken into segments. All of these segments are included as Tier II projects.
- 2. An identified location for a pedestrian and bicycle bridge across Peachtree Industrial Boulevard that will make for an easier and safer crossing. The bridge is identified as a Tier II project.
- 3. Conceptual sidewalk designs for facilities on Martin Farm Road, Russell Street, White Street, and Westbrook Road, which are all identified as Tier II projects.

\*Sample of Comments from Online Survey and Input Map, May - June 2021



Results of Community Engagement Activity at Pop-up Event to Select a Loop Route.

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# PROPOSED ROUTE SUMMARY

The proposed loop will be a combination of existing trails, new main loop segments, and new neighborhood connector spurs:

## **Existing Trails**

Approximately 3.97 miles of Suwanee's existing trail system would form the backbone of the continuous loop system. These sections may be upgraded with features like improved wayfinding signs, system branding, stormwater management, and placemaking elements like art, landscaping, or trailside activities.

- Brushy Creek Greenway (0.49 mi)
- Town Center Paths (Upgraded) (0.52 mi)
- Suwanee Creek Greenway (1.68 mi)
- McGinnis Ferry Road Path (0.8 mi)
- Scales Road Trail (0.48 mi)

# **New Main Loop Segments**

New segments would "fill in the gaps" for the remaining 1.04 miles to 1.84 miles (with the Wetland Crossing alternative) of the main loop route. Where feasible, these would be multi-use paths to serve both pedestrians and cyclists and would be separated from vehicular traffic. In some cases like the Town Center, cyclists would use on-street facilities and pedestrians will walk on sidewalks.

- Jackson Street Path (0.57 mi) A
- McGinnis Ferry Trail Connection (0.08 mi)
- Stonecypher Road Path (0.1 mi)
- Railroad Crossing (0.02 mi) G
- Alternative: Wetland Crossing (0.8 mi)
- Town Center on Main Path (0.27 mi)

## **New Neighborhood Connectors**

New connectors would help people get from their neighborhoods to the main loop route. These would be multi-use paths next to streets, giving pedestrians and cyclists designated space away from vehicles. They will add about 2.03 miles to the system, in addition to the main loop route.

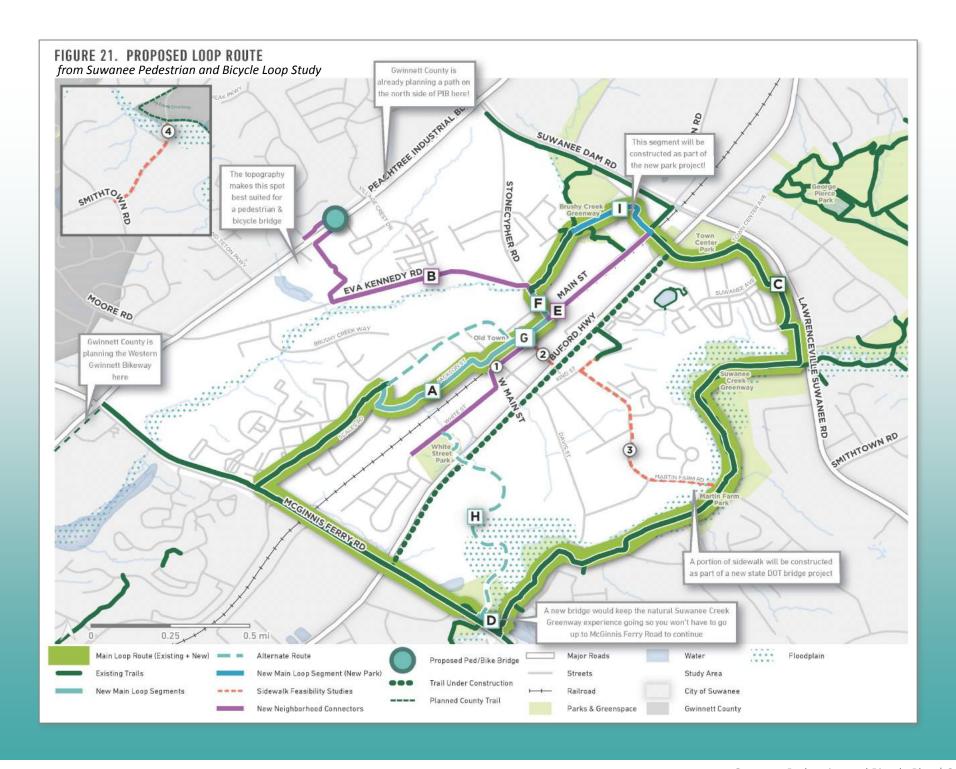
- White Street & Rail Corridor Path (see page 42) (0.55 mi)
- G E Main Street Path (0.5 mi)
  - Pedestrian Bridge, Utility Easement Path, and Eva Kennedy Road Path (0.98 mi)



A potential pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Peachtree Industrial Boulevard ( ) near Silver Peak Parkway would give people a place to cross this major road and access the trail system without interacting with vehicular traffic.

Trail Cost Estimate Summary					
A	\$1,017,755	E	\$209,813		
В	\$3,166,075	F	\$177,309		
C	\$301,259	G	\$352,450		
D	\$445,000	H	\$4,910,443		
Total	1	11	\$10,580,104		

See full cost estimate in the Appendix for assumptions



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#### PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

Once the Suwanee Pedestrian and Bicycle Loop and Sidewalk Feasibility Studies were complete, recommended projects for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan were prioritized into three tiers. Projects were prioritized according to a list of policies including the following:

## Considerations that increased support for a potential pedestrian project

- Prioritize usable system improvements that improve the overall pedestrian network of the City rather than just one neighborhood or development.
- System Improvement Example Filling gaps in pedestrian and bicycle networks on arterial roads, local connector roads that connect multiple neighborhoods, and greenways that run throughout the City.
- Usability Example A pedestrian bridge over Peachtree Industrial Boulevard would be a system improvement, but conventional wisdom among experts is that pedestrian bridges that are not at grade are not well used. This would be an example of an improvement that would add to the system, but may not be well used.
- Prioritize projects that serve large numbers of users.
- **Cost effective projects** that have good return on investment.
- Prioritize connecting users to destinations including downtown, public schools, public parks, and existing trails and pedestrian systems.
- Prioritize improvements that make **downtown more pedestrian friendly** (walkable/rideable).
- Prioritize projects that are good candidates for **grant funding** (of sufficient amount to address the majority of anticipated costs).
- Prioritize projects that expand, enhance and promote the City's existing robust pedestrian systems(s).
- Prioritize improvements that bring pedestrian facilities into ADA compliance and meet the needs of pedestrians with physical impairments. This includes upgrading to accessible pedestrian signals (APS) at identified needed locations that include auditory signals and tactile indicators to help blind and visually impaired pedestrians locate APS crossings. The City will coordinate with county and state entities as need to fund and construct such improvements.

#### PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

### Considerations that decreased support for a potential pedestrian project

- Projects that are unreasonably expensive when anticipated usership is factored into the analysis. Some projects may have a particularly high cost-to-benefit ratio which may make it impractical.
- Pedestrian improvements inside of existing neighborhoods. The City seeks to focus on system improvements. The City will not undertake pedestrian improvements within completed subdivisions unless the subdivision agrees to a special tax assessment that would need to be sufficient to cover all of the costs associated with the improvement (construction costs, project management costs, right-of -way acquisition, utility relocation, etc.).
- Pedestrian improvements that are likely to be addressed by **private development** in the near future should be given lower priority by the City. This includes sidewalks along road frontages of undeveloped tracts of land, or land that is underutilized and likely to be redeveloped in the near future.
- Pedestrian improvements that are likely to be addressed by **another government entity** (GDOT or the County) should be deferred.

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### **RECOMMENDED PROJECTS**

The recommended pedestrian and bicycle improvement projects are divided into three tiers. The City has historically invested approximately \$300,000 per year in pedestrian and bicycle improvements. As a result, all of the Tier I projects and some Tier II projects from the previous plan were completed. Since funding is limited, the recommended projects must be prioritized for implementation over time. The following tiers will guide the implementation of pedestrian and bicycle projects as resources are available.

#### Tier I

Tier I includes projects that are high priority and should be implemented through the capital improvement plan within the next five years. These include projects previously listed as Tier II projects in the 2011 *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* that are network completion projects that would fill gaps in the existing pedestrian network. Tier I also includes the addition of requested accessible pedestrian signals (APS) and low cost improvements (adding sharrows and crosswalk) that will connect existing facilities.

### Tier II

Tier II includes all of the new recommended projects that were studied in the Suwanee Loop and Sidewalk Feasibility Studies. The community expressed high demand for these projects, but the cost of these projects is significant. These projects should be funded as external funding sources are available. Projects that align with the goals of funding sources that are good candidates

for receiving grants should be prioritized. The City should plan to provide required matching funds for projects that qualify for grants.

These high demand Tier II projects include the ten segments that compose the loop route that can be implemented individually as funding allows. This also includes three projects that would link to significant trail systems: a sidewalk on Martin Farm Road connecting Old Town and Buford Highway to the Suwanee Creek Greenway; a sidewalk on Westbrook Road connecting Smithtown Road to the Ivy Creek Greenway, a planned county trail that will connect to George Pierce Park and continue all the way to the Mall of Georgia; and a sidewalk along Suwanee Avenue connecting to George Pierce Park.

Tier II also includes three sidewalk gaps that are prioritized in Tier II because they are network completion projects but they are not in as high demand as gap projects in Tier I. These should be implemented as opportunities arise or through the capital improvement plan after Tier I projects.

#### Tier III

Tier III includes a combination of projects that were moved forward from the previous *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* and newly identified projects that are not the highest priority or are likely to be implemented by private development. These projects should be implemented as opportunities arise or through the capital improvement plan after projects in Tier I and Tier II.

## Projects from 2011 Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan Removed from the Updated List

The following projects from the 2011 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan were not included in the updated list because public input indicated the projects were no longer needed, were not highly desired, new projects accomplished the same goal in a more desirable way, or the project is inconsistent with policies that guided prioritization.

- Install pedestrian hybrid beacon at two of three locations: Peachtree Industrial Boulevard between Village Crest Drive and Silver Peak Parkway, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard northeast of McGinnis Ferry Road, or McGinnis Ferry Road northwest of Scales Road. (replaced with pedestrian and bicycle bridge project over Peachtree Industrial Boulevard)
- 10' greenway along Georgia Power easement running parallel to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard along Brushy Creek (9500') (low demand – redundant of Eva Kennedy multiuse path)
- Trail from Moore Road to Sims Lake Park (1600') (low demand – community expressed desire to prioritize infill of sidewalk gaps on Moore Road and Settles Bridge Road instead)
- Construction of new 5' sidewalk on the east side of Landover Crossing and Landover Way (2600') (inconsistent with prioritization policies)
- Work with neighborhoods to provide sidewalk and bicycle interconnections (addressed with policy statement)

### **Projects by Others**

The following projects from the 2011 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan were not included in the three tiers because these projects will be accomplished by other entities. The City is in support of these projects.

- Enhance Crossings of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard at Suwanee Dam Road intersection. (intersection improvements underway by County)
- 5' sidewalk along Suwanee Creek Road from Idlewild Place to Eryn Circle (350') (addressed by future County Loop trail)
- Sidewalk and 10' trail along Smithtown Road extension from Satellite Boulevard to Horizon Drive (2700') (should be completed by the County when Smithtown Road is extended by the County)
- 10' multiuse trail along Old Peachtree Road from McGinnis Ferry Road extension to Smithtown Road extension (9000') (should be completed by the County when Smithtown Road is extended by the County)

#### Tier I

- 1. Requested auditory accessible pedestrian signals (APS)
- **Buford Highway HAWK signal**
- Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and Smithtown Road
- 2. Russell Street sidewalk from Buford Highway to Main Street
- 3. High demand sidewalk GAPS that are network completion projects from previous **Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan**
- 4 gaps along Suwanee Dam Road and Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road (Maven to Shadowbrook Church entrance, Heartis to Shadowbrook Church entrance, Heartis to Buford Highway, and Suwanee Avenue to Mohawk Trail - 2,224 linear feet of 5 foot wide sidewalks)
- Gap on south side of Settles Bridge Road Moore Road to Short Street (900 linear feet of 5 foot wide sidewalk)
- Gap on Moore Road Settles Bridge Road to existing sidewalk (500 linear feet of 5 foot wide sidewalk)
- 4. Easily implemented interim projects recommended by the Loop Study
- Sharrows connecting end of Scales Road Trail to existing Main Street sharrow (Scales Road to Jackson Street to Calaboose Street to Main Street to Russell Street)
- Crosswalk on Scales Road connecting sidewalks on opposite sides of the road



Project B - Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge over PIB



Project B - Eva Kennedy Shared Use Path



Project E - Main Street Shared Use Path

#### Tier II

## 1. Projects that are part of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Loop

- Pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Peachtree Industrial Boulevard from Silver Creek Parkway to Eva Kennedy Road (Project B in Loop Study)
- Eva Kennedy shared use path (Silver Peak Parkway to Stonecypher Rd. Project B in Loop Study)
- Main Street shared use path (Project E in Loop Study)
- Pedestrian/bicycle railroad crossing at Russell and Main Street (Project G in Loop Study)
- White Street shared use path (White Street Park to Russell Street)
- Stonecypher Road shared use path from Main Street to Eva Kennedy Road (Project F in Loop Study)
- Amenitizing existing trails
- Pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Suwanee Creek north of McGinnis Ferry Road bridge (Project D in Loop Study)
- Town Center Trail (Project C in Loop Study)
- Shared path along Jackson Street from Calaboose Street to existing sidewalk east of Cambron Commons Trace 800 feet (Project A in Loop Study)
- Greenway through wetlands connecting Suwanee Creek Greenway and trailhead at McGinnis Ferry Road to White Street Park including a tunnel under Buford Highway - 0.8 mile (Project H in Loop Study)

## 2. Projects linking significant trail systems

- Martin Farm Road sidewalk gaps (King Street to Suwanee Creek Greenway)
- Westbrook Road sidewalk (Smithtown Road to Ivy Creek Greenway trailhead)
- Sidewalk along Suwanee Avenue from Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road to George Pierce Park (900') and 10' trail within park to existing trail (300')

### 3. Low demand sidewalk gaps that are network completion projects

- Sidewalk on southwest side of McGinnis Ferry Road between existing sidewalks in front of apartment complex (700')
- Sidewalk along Satellite Boulevard from existing sidewalks to Annandale Lane (1,530')
- Martin Farm Road from Satellite Boulevard to existing sidewalks (200')

#### Tier III

### 1. New project identified during the Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan update

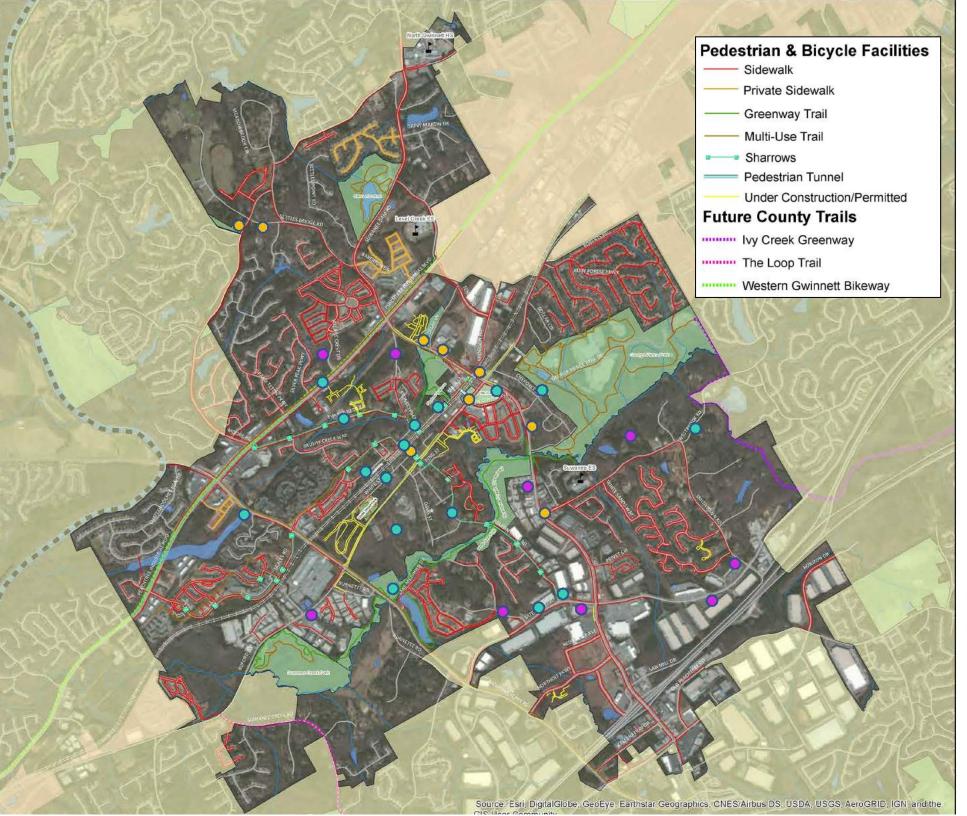
5' sidewalk along Buford Highway from Burnette Road to existing sidewalks north of Swiftwater Park Drive.

### 2. Projects that are from previous Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan but not high demand

- 10' trail from Smithtown Road to George Pierce Park and bridge for trail access to George Pierce Park (coordinate with trail inside park)
- 5' Sidewalk along Smithtown Road from Morning Glen Drive to Satellite Boulevard (1500')
- 5' Sidewalk along Annandale Lane between existing sidewalks (400')
- 5' Sidewalk along Lawrenceville Suwanee Road (west side) from Greenway to south of Smithtown Road (2500')
- 5' Sidewalk along south side of Satellite Boulevard from Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road to Martin Farm Road (800')
- 5' Sidewalk along Satellite Boulevard (south side) from office building driveway to Smithtown Road (2800')

### 3. Higher demand projects likely to be completed by private development in the future

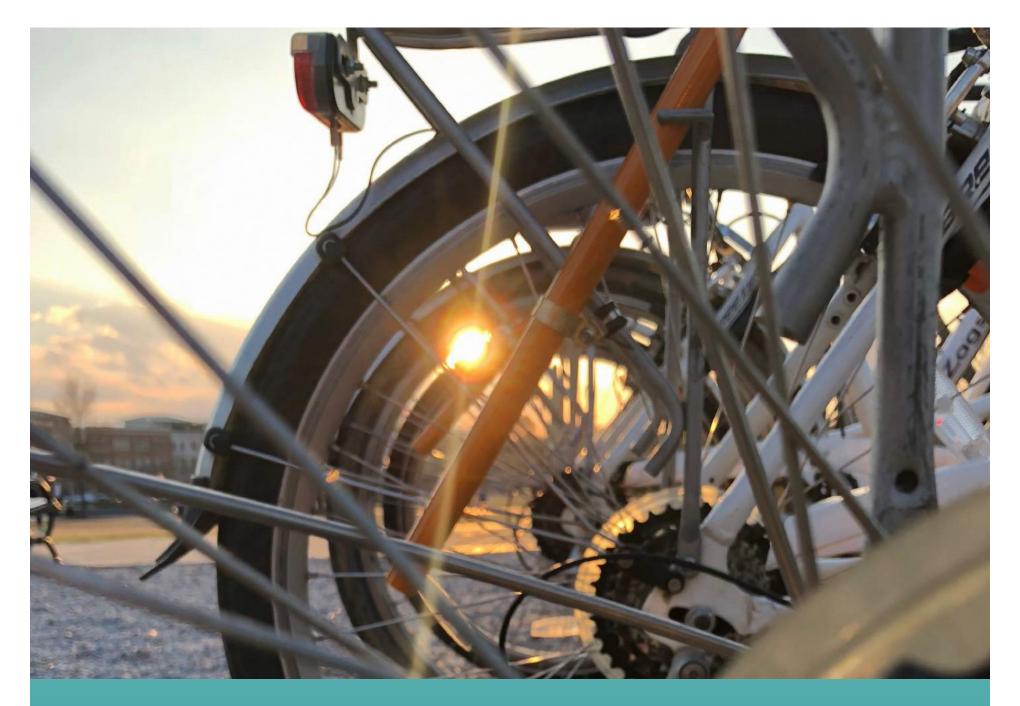
- 5' sidewalk along east side of Village Crest Drive from Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to existing sidewalk (860')
- 5' Sidewalk along Stonecypher Road from Pringle Drive to Suwanee Dam Road (1500')



Tier III 🏻

Tier II (

Tier I ๐



**SUWANEE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PLAN 2022 UPDATE**