



SUWANEE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE LOOP AND SIDEWALK FEASIBILITY STUDIES

A SUPPORTING DOCUMENT OF THE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PLAN
DECEMBER 2021

city of
suwanee
georgia



TOOLE
DESIGN

MKSK

TODD W. BRESSI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the advisory committee, community members, elected officials, and staff whose time and ideas shaped these studies.

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DECEMBER 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Suwanee's *Pedestrian and Bicycle Loop and Sidewalk Feasibility Studies* documents the process to build on prior investments in bicycle and pedestrian facilities by tying them together as a unified, safe, and comfortable multiuse loop for all users and improve access to the loop. The results of this study will be used to inform the update to the City's *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* which includes the entire City of Suwanee. The study area for this effort is bounded by the existing Suwanee Creek Greenway to the south, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (PIB) to the north, McGinnis Ferry Road to the west, and Suwanee Buford Dam Road/Lawrenceville Suwanee Road to the east.

The study had three objectives:

- 1 Identify a preferred Suwanee loop alignment**
- 2 Conduct a sidewalk feasibility study for four corridors within the study area**
- 3 Improve connections across PIB**

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) funded a significant portion of this study through the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI).



THE PUBLIC PROCESS

The Suwanee community was invited to help develop the preferred loop route, consider tradeoffs for critical sidewalk projects, and give the project local flare with their ideas about trail features, amenities, and branding. The following were opportunities for public discussion:

- **Project Website** – A dedicated website was created for the project and was advertised through the City of Suwanee website, newsletters, and social media platforms.
- **Pop-up Booths** – Two pop-up booths were set up to receive community input on three alternative draft loop routes, as well as tradeoffs for the construction of potential sidewalks.
- **Online Survey** – Following the identification of a draft loop route and design concepts, a series of online surveys were released specific to project components.
- **Community Input Map** – The City hosted an online community input map to gather location-specific public comments on the proposed loop.
- **Open House** – A final community event was held to review the draft concepts, planning-level costs, and placemaking ideas.

An Advisory Committee was also established and composed of Suwanee residents who met three times throughout the project to give their insights on key issues, review draft findings and concepts, and provide direction on project branding and the loop route.



 **243**
total survey responses

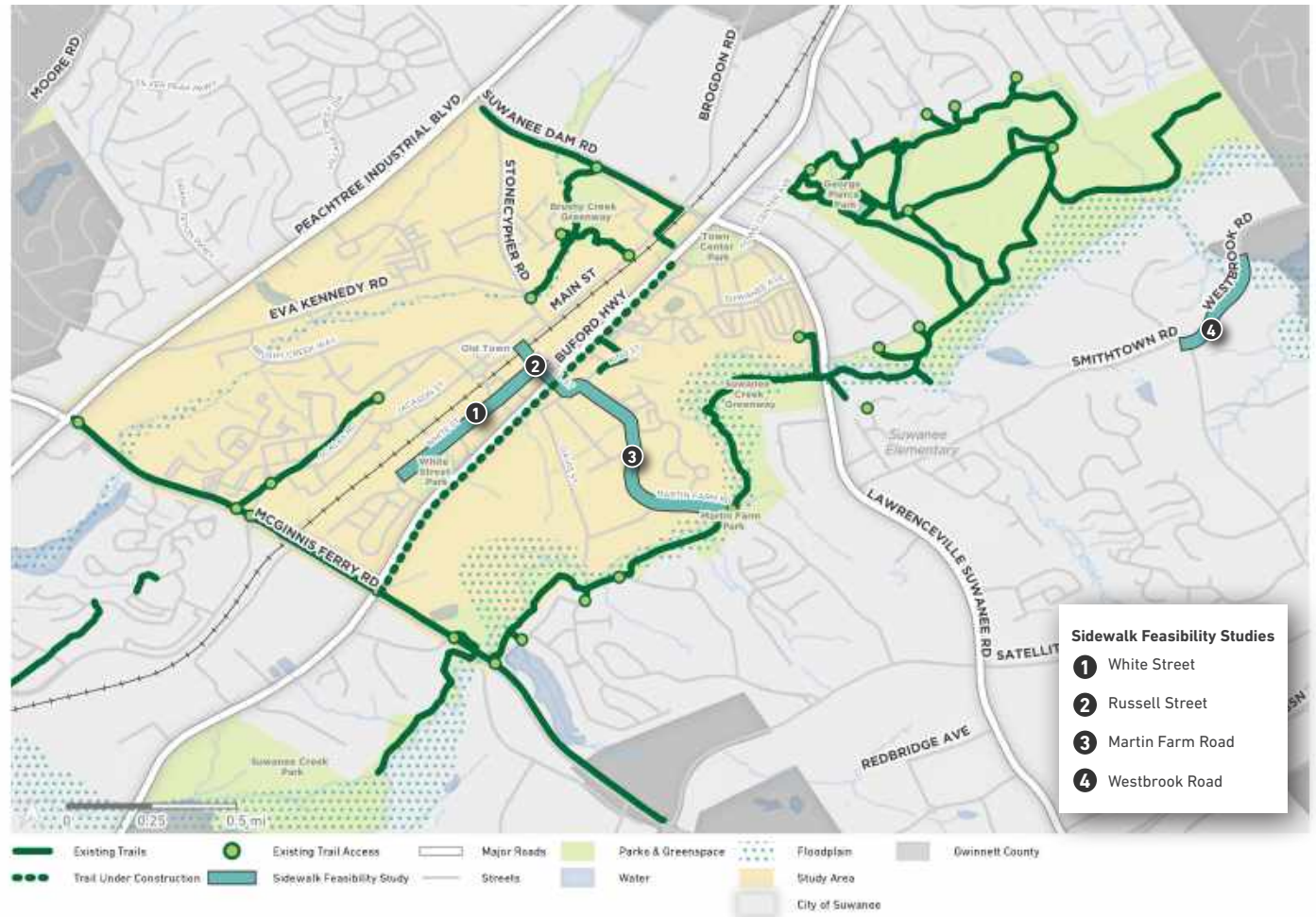
 **1,393**
people visited the
project website

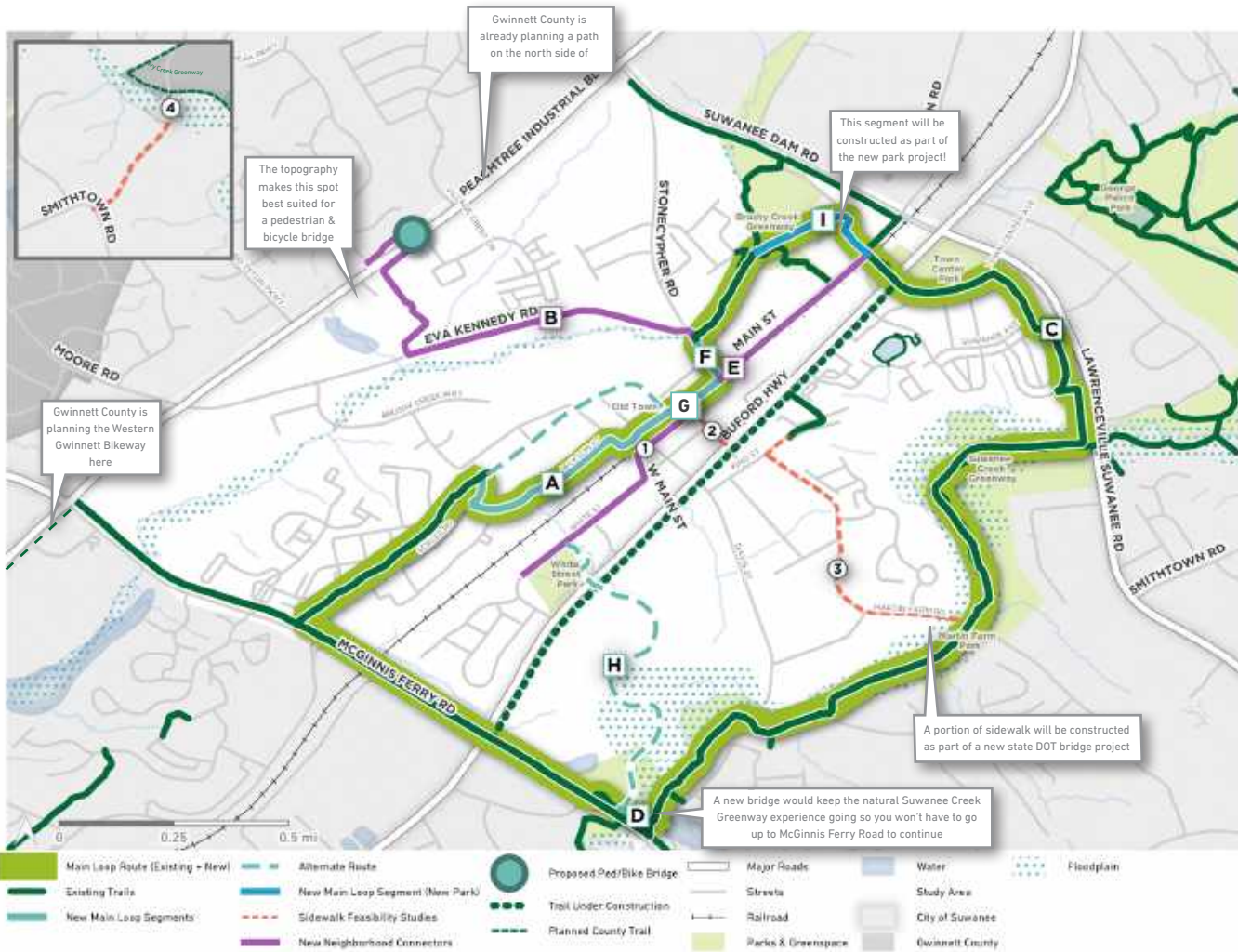
60 
people responded to the
community input map

SIDEWALKS

This study looked at the feasibility, costs and potential impacts of four sidewalk projects that could provide key connections to the Suwanee loop and other regional trails. The sidewalk projects were:

- **White Street** from White Street Park to Russell Street. The community's preference is for a 10-foot shared use path on the northside with a landscaped buffer, rather than a standard sidewalk.
- **Russell Street** from Main Street to Buford Highway. The City is already moving forward with a 5-foot sidewalk and retaining wall on the northeast side of the street.
- **Martin Farm Road** from Buford Highway to the Suwanee Creek Greenway. Through the community process a 5-foot sidewalk on the north side of the road with curb and gutter was identified as the preferred design. The community acknowledged that many mature trees would likely be removed, and property would be impacted.
- **Westbrook Road** from Smithtown Road to the proposed Ivy Creek Greenway. A new 5-foot sidewalk on the north side of the road that ties directly into the planned access point for the Ivy Creek Greenway was preferred by the community.





- A. Jackson Street Path (0.57 mi)
- B. Pedestrian Bridge, Utility Easement Path, and Eva Kennedy Road Path (0.98 mi)
- C. Town Center Paths (Upgraded) (0.52 mi)
- D. McGinnis Ferry Trail Connection (0.08 mi)
- E /G. Main Street Path (0.5 mi)
- F. Stonycyper Road Path (0.1 mi)
- G. Railroad Crossing (0.02 mi)
- H. Alternative: Wetland Crossing (0.8 mi)
- I. Town Center on Main Path (0.27 mi)

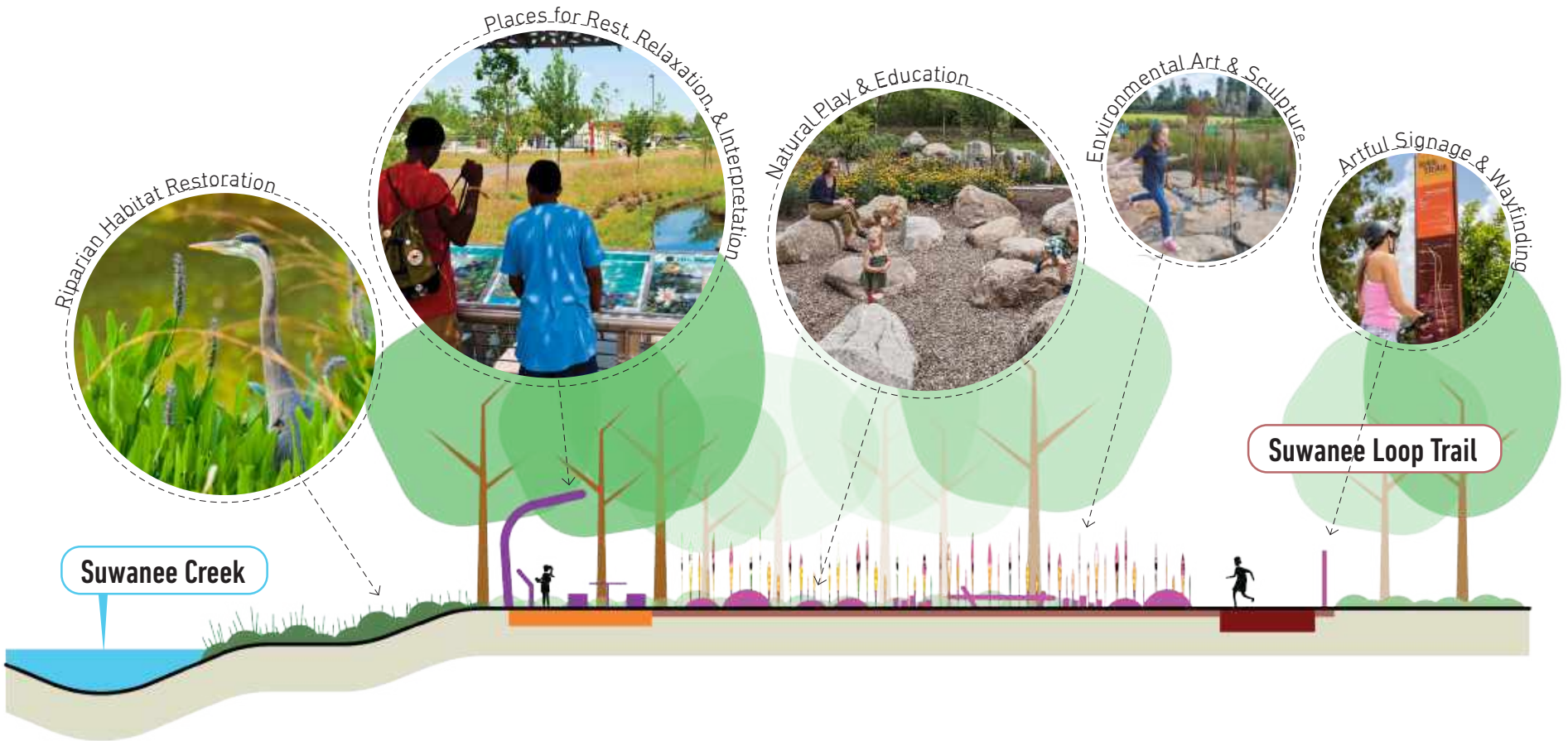
TRAILS

A proposed route was developed based on community input and technical analysis, including critical considerations around the railroad, PIB, and locations with topographical constraints. Community feedback often mentioned that the natural setting of the existing trail system should be expanded to other areas when appropriate. The proposed loop is a combination of existing trails, new main loop segments, and new neighborhood connector spurs. The new loop system would add approximately 4 miles to the existing 16 miles of Suwanee's system, and connect to the regional trail system.



BRANDING AND PLACEMAKING

To create a loop experience as distinctive as the City, the study developed a brand direction for the loop (Section 6) that complements the existing city brand, and identified opportunities for placemaking features that will integrate art, interaction, community identify, and natural beauty placemaking strategies (Section 7).





NEXT STEPS

The City of Suwanee has successfully implemented many of its previous plans through its focus on executing action plans, building and maintaining broad community support for its projects, and leveraging an array of internal and external funding sources. These strategies will be essential to moving the projects identified in this study forward. The Action Plan (Section 8) summarizes steps, partners, and funding needed to make the loop and its connecting sidewalks a reality.



1 INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

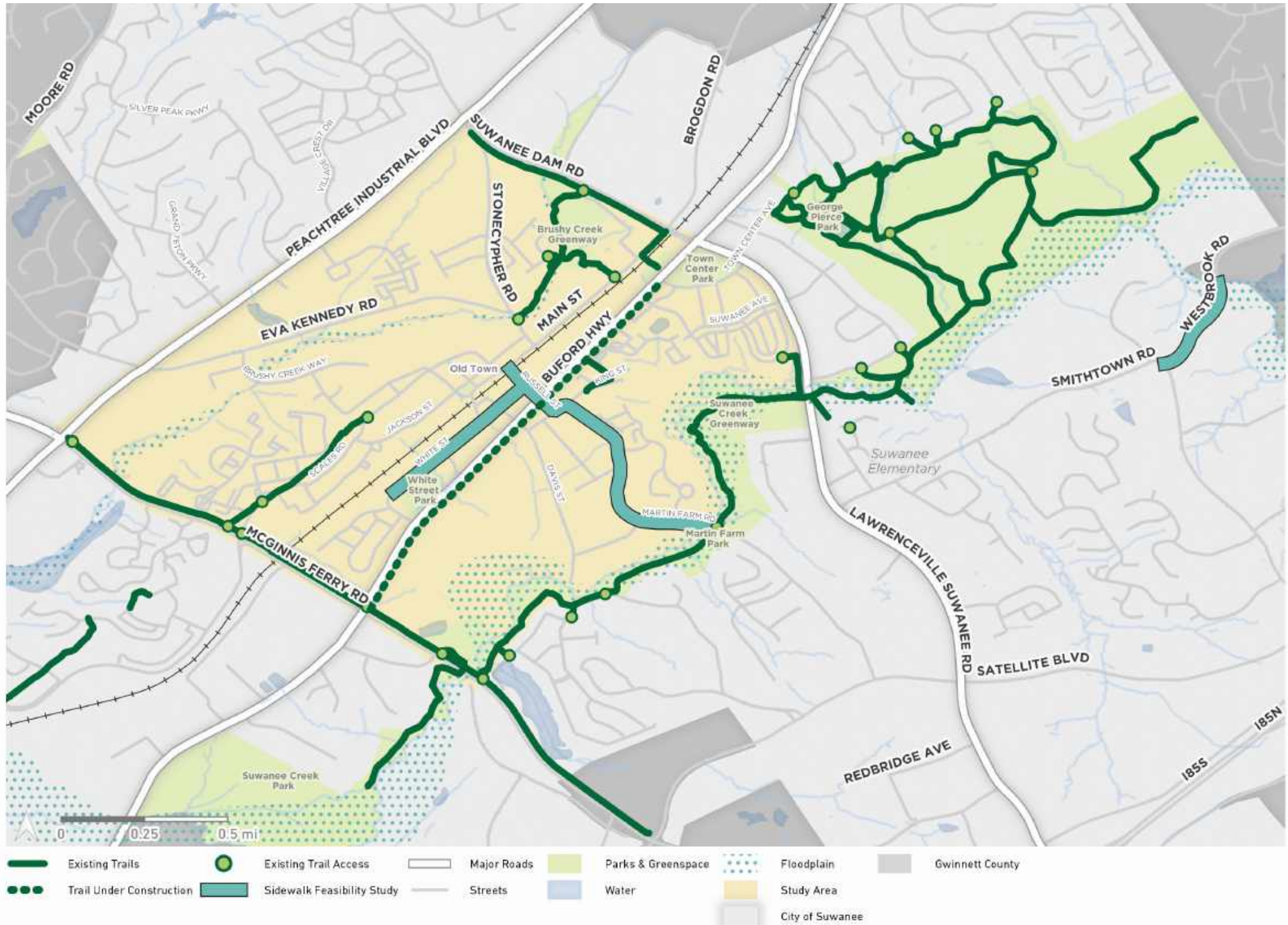
The City of Suwanee continues to show the region that life in the suburbs can be anything but conventional. Its inclusive, family-friendly approach continues to foster healthy living, authentic community connections, and distinct identity through investments in more than 600 acres of open space and parks, 16 miles of multi-use trails, and dozens of permanent and temporary art installations. Expanding and improving these amenities to create a unified, continuously branded and amenitized multiuse trail loop to connect the community was the motivation for this study.

To set the foundation for this study, the city has been actively working on updating the *2011 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*. The process for the update began in 2019 and included interviews with elected and appointed officials by city staff, and a

public open house. This study will inform the update to the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*.

While the study area for the updated *Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan* is the entire City of Suwanee, the study area for this effort is bounded by the existing Suwanee Creek Greenway to the south, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (PIB) to the north, McGinnis Ferry Road to the west, and Suwanee Buford Dam Road/Lawrenceville Suwanee Road to the east. Connections to existing and planned multiuse trails outside of this study area were taken into consideration given that connections to the wider Suwanee and Gwinnett County network were one of the goals of this study.

FIGURE 1. STUDY AREA



Funding Partner: The Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) serves as the regional planning and intergovernmental agency for the 10-county Atlanta region. Since 2000, the agency has used federal transportation dollars to fund grants to more than 120 communities to develop planning studies as part of its Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). This grant supports communities in improving their livability, vibrancy, and mobility and access to jobs and services. Receiving funding from ARC's LCI program also positions communities to receive funding for implementation of transportation projects identified in their LCI plans.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Plan development focused on three major areas:

- 1. Identify a preferred Suwanee loop alignment** — The study area currently has a disconnected trail system, with no designated wayfinding or consistent facility typology. Completing a Suwanee loop that is amenitized (e.g. art, benches, trash bins, gateways) and branded, will serve as the framework to connect neighborhoods, community amenities, and regional trails to downtown Suwanee.
- 2. Conduct a sidewalk feasibility study for four corridors within the study area** — There are three corridors within the study area and one outside the study area that currently have no sidewalks, yet provide direct access to some of Suwanee's most active areas. This study examined the feasibility, potential impacts, and cost estimates of the sidewalks along with the community's desire for implementation. The four corridors are:
 - White Street from White Street Park to Russell Street
 - Russell Street from Main Street to Buford Highway
 - Martin Farm Road from Buford Highway to the Suwanee Creek Greenway
 - Westbrook Road from Smithtown Road to the proposed Ivy Creek Greenway
- 3. Improve connections across Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (PIB)** — Over the years the city has heard frequent complaints about the lack of a safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle connection across PIB. This study identified a potential location for a pedestrian bridge to provide residents on the north side of PIB access to Suwanee's downtown.

WHY TRAILS?

Traditional infrastructure investments often focus on roads, bridges, and water and sewer utilities. However, the City of Suwanee understands that trails and greenways are also essential infrastructure components. Trails help protect ecosystems and connect humans and nature, fostering increased physical activity and improved health. But the impacts of trails extend far beyond their recreational or environmental aspects.

As this planning process has demonstrated, the course of trail planning, construction, and use can be a catalyst for community building. Neighborhoods rally around public infrastructure improvement, trails connect residents to nearby gathering spaces and businesses, and trail-based events attract residents city wide. Trail maintenance days bring the community together in a positive manner. Studies show that trails discourage illegal activities rather than increase them.

Health and wellness: Access to trails encourage outdoor experiences which result in positive impacts on health, wellness, and community. There are many recent studies showing the positive impacts of trails close to home. In general, these studies show that trails close to neighborhoods increase the amount of time one spends outside and the amount of exercise residents get in a week. This increase results in improved health, both physical and mental. Additionally, in a 2011 study, the American Heart Association found that each \$1 of trail construction directly results in \$3 of medical cost savings.

Economic benefits: Quality trails can boost the tourism industry, attracting visitors to explore the community. According to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, outdoor recreational activities contribute a total of \$730 billion annually to the economy. This supports 6.5 million jobs and stimulates 8% of all consumer spending. These outdoor recreation trips can require expenditures on food, gas, and outdoor gear, spurring an added investment in communities.



The Atlanta BeltLine's popularity has encouraged trailside businesses to activate their former backdoors (top) and attracted new restaurants, offices, housing, and other development along the trail (bottom).



Trails are inclusive: Trails, by their very nature, promote social, racial, gender, and economic equity. They are almost always free to use, are available 24/7/365, and provide transportation alternatives.

Health benefits: Trails and greenways are accessible, free and safe healthy recreation amenities for all ages to cycle, walk, hike, jog, ride, paddle, or skate. Trails make it easy for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routines by connecting them with places they want or need to go. Communities that encourage physical activity by making use of trails and greenways can see a significant positive impact on public health and wellness.



A 2017 study by the East Coast Greenway Alliance of 70 miles of their route in the North Carolina Triangle region produced the following health benefits:

11,225,000 — ESTIMATED MILES BIKED PER YEAR

7,407,000 — ESTIMATED MILES WALKED PER YEAR

3,592,000 — HOURS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PER YEAR

\$1.5 MILLION — IN HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS PER YEAR



The Scioto Greenway connects Downtown Columbus to its riverfront and was designed to help repair its river ecosystem

Transportation benefits: Greenways and trails can function as alternative transportation corridors, serving as an important part of an urban and/or regional multi-modal transportation system. The ability to avoid congested streets and highways, and travel through natural areas on foot or by non-motorized means, is a large factor in a community's "livability", as well as safety.

Environmental benefits: Typically linear by design, greenways and trails protect important habitat and provide corridors for people and wildlife. They also help improve air and water quality. By protecting land along rivers and streams, greenways prevent soil erosion and filter pollution caused by agricultural and road runoff. Trails and greenways are hands-on environmental classrooms. People of all ages can see for themselves the precious and intriguing natural world from which they often feel so far removed.



Historic Preservation and Community Identity:

Many community leaders have been surprised at how trails have become sources of community identity and pride. These effects are magnified when communities use trails and greenways to highlight and provide access to historic and cultural resources. Many trails and greenways themselves preserve historically significant transportation corridors.

Trailside sculptural installation in Seattle

DESIGNING FOR EVERYONE

Great pedestrian and cycling facilities are designed to maximize access and use of the facility for everyone. This not only means ensuring ease of physical access for people using wheelchairs or strollers by meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards. It also means considering potential user behavior and perceptions to choose routes and facility types that will appeal to a wide range of users. Most people (51 to 56 percent of the total population, based on a national survey of the 50 largest metros) are interested in cycling, but are concerned about specific facility types and conditions. They prefer to use separated facilities that make them feel protected. For this reason, separated facilities with comfortable buffers will be used wherever possible. Intersections will be designed to maximize visibility, offer safe places to wait, and slow vehicle traffic. By designing for the most vulnerable or concerned users, we can create an experience that is safe and attractive for as many people as possible.

BICYCLIST DESIGN USER PROFILES

Interested but Concerned

51-56% of the total population

Often not comfortable with bike lanes, may bike on sidewalks even if bike lanes are provided; prefer off-street or separated bicycle facilities or quiet or traffic-calmed residential roads. May not bike at all if bicycle facilities do not meet needs for perceived comfort.

Somewhat Confident

5-9% of the total population

Generally prefer more separated facilities, but are comfortable riding in bicycle lanes or on paved shoulders if need be.

Highly Confident

4-7% of the total population

Comfortable riding with traffic; will use roads without bike lanes.



LOW STRESS TOLERANCE

HIGH STRESS TOLERANCE

Data Source: Dill, Jennifer and McNeil, Nathan, "Revisiting the Four Types of Cyclists: Findings from a National Survey," Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board, 2587: 90-99, 2016.

Facility Types

SHARED USE PATHS: A path for pedestrians and cyclists (10+ feet wide) that is physically separated from vehicular traffic by an open space or a barrier. Depending on their context, shared use paths may be:



SIDE PATHS:
Shared use path within an existing street right-of-way (next to a road)



OFF-STREET TRAILS: Shared use path in an independent right-of-way (separate from a road)



SIDEWALKS: Paved path for pedestrians on the side of a road.



BICYCLE LANES: A lane in the roadway designated for use by cyclists through striping, signage, and pavement markings.



BUFFERED BICYCLE LANES: A bicycle lane with a designated buffer space separating cyclists from adjacent vehicular traffic or parking.



SEPARATED BICYCLE LANES: Bike paths that are physically separated from vehicular traffic by a barrier or vertical separation (i.e. at sidewalk level) and allow bicycle movement in one or both directions.



BICYCLE BOULEVARDS: Streets with low existing vehicular speeds and volumes that are enhanced to improve comfort and safety for cyclists riding in shared lanes with cars, such as traffic calming, pavement parkings, and signage.



② EXISTING CONDITIONS



EXISTING CONDITIONS

AREA CONTEXT

The Regional Perspective

Parks, open space, and trails are essential elements of a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable community. The City of Suwanee recognized the importance these systems provide early on which led to the development of the Suwanee Creek and Brushy Creek trails, in addition to the numerous multi-use paths on key corridors such as McGinnis Ferry Road and Scales Road. These systems serve as the foundation for this study and as a link to other regional initiatives. Several existing and planned trail systems will tie into the Suwanee network, and include:

Ivy Creek Greenway – George Pierce Park, a county operated park located in the city, serves as the gateway for the Ivy Creek Greenway. The park provides over 300 acres for recreation and includes playgrounds, soccer fields, and a senior center. A new greenway connection is currently moving through the development process to connect George Pierce Park south along Ivy Creek to the Mall of Georgia. It will have an access point along the northside of Westbrook Road.

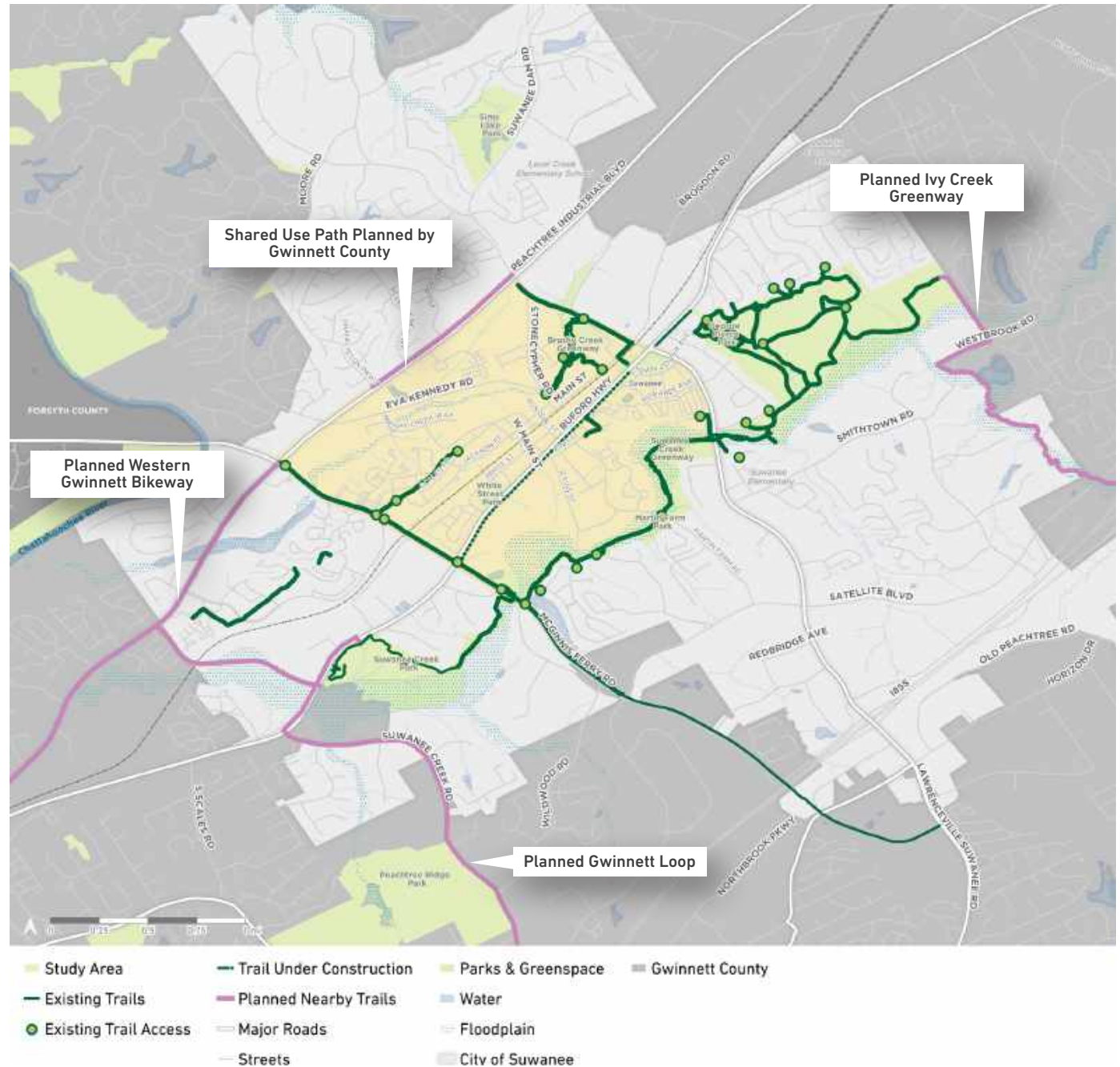
FIGURE 2. REGIONAL CONNECTIONS MAP

Western Gwinnett Bikeway –

The Western Gwinnett Bikeway is a planned multiuse trail along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard connecting the cities of Norcross, Peachtree Corners, Berkeley Lake, Duluth, Suwanee, Sugar Hill, and Buford. The trail currently runs from Norcross to Duluth.

Gwinnett Loop – The proposed

Gwinnett Loop is a 17-mile multiuse trail that will connect Shorty Howell Park, McDaniel Farm Park, Peachtree Ridge Park and Suwanee Creek Park, along various roads and natural settings.



The Local Context

Suwanee's LCI (Livable Centers Initiative) area was the boundry for this study. Within this boundary are numerous community amenities and natural resources that were reviewed to:

- Provide a baseline in developing a Suwanee loop;
- Identify a preferred grade-separated location across PIB; and
- Examine the feasibility of a more robust sidewalk network.

Destinations

The City of Suwanee built a strong community with a variety of destinations. Most of the activity is focused in Town Center, with a growing activity node in Old Town. Peachtree Industrial Boulevard serves mainly auto-oriented, everyday retailers.

Key Observations:

- **Town Center** is the hub of Suwanee with its grand park and City Hall. Expansion plans for Town Center Park (Town Center on Main), along with the new Station Park will see this area continue to be the focal point of the community. It also has a host of local dining and retail establishments, some office uses, several civic buildings, a public library, a mix of housing types, the Brushy Creek Greenway and Playtown Suwanee, along with access to the Suwanee Creek Greenway.
- The **Old Town** area is continuing to grow. The Harvest Park neighborhood is bringing a new mix of single-family homes and townhomes, adjacent to White Street Park which is anchored by a public orchard and the Harvest Farm Community Garden. Historic Old Town is also continuing to add new infill homes, and a new restaurant in the historic Pierce's Corner Building expected to open in 2022.
- **Peachtree Industrial Boulevard** continues to provide the community many of its daily needs. Auto-oriented commercial development in this corridor includes grocery stores, fast-food chains, and gas stations. Some small new neighborhoods are also under construction along the corridor with access off of PIB and Eva Kennedy Road.



FIGURE 3. DESTINATIONS MAP





Peachtree Industrial Boulevard



Railroad

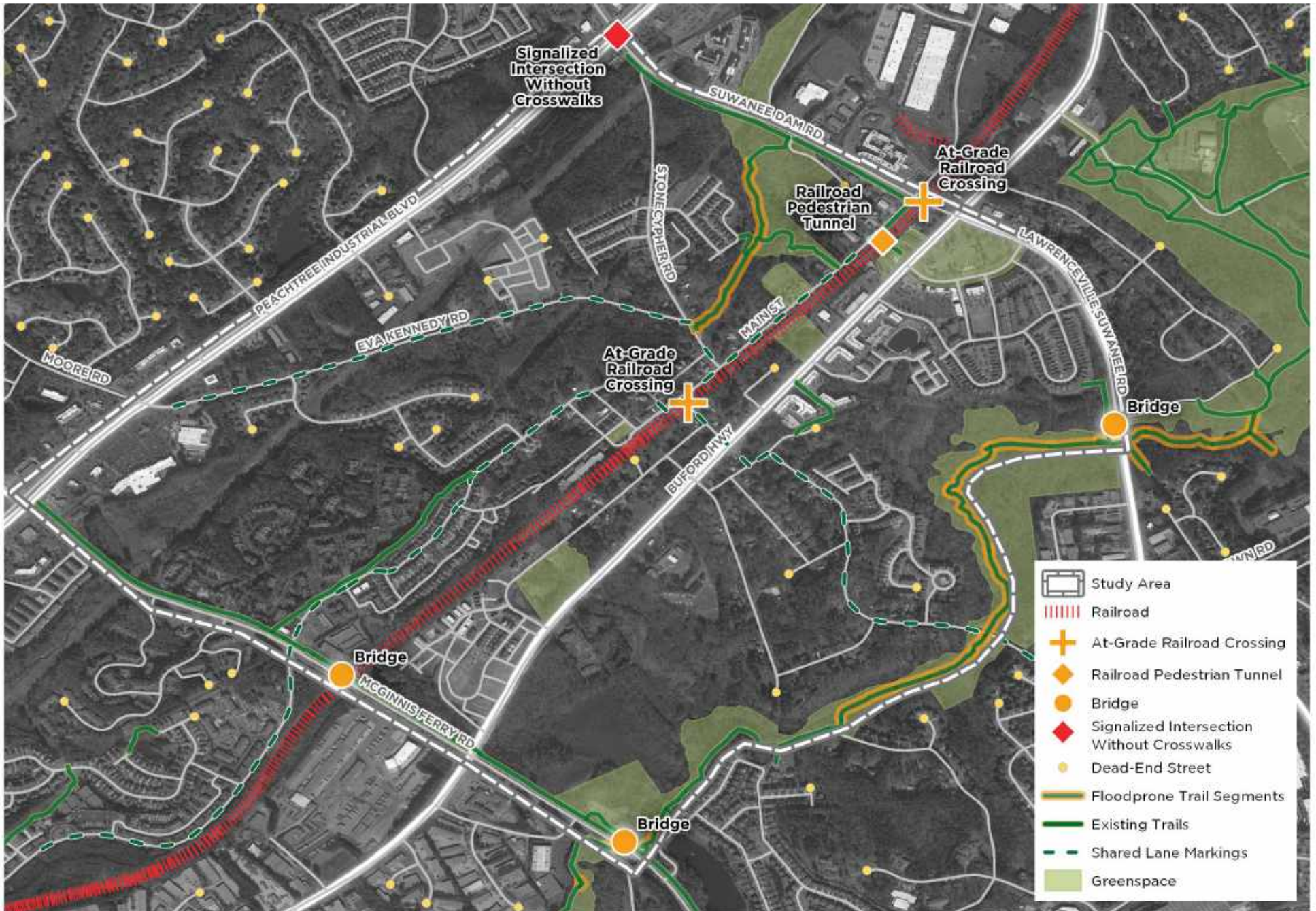
Barriers to Access

A robust, connected, and well designed trail system ensures that all users, regardless of age and ability, are safe and feel comfortable along the route and at its transition points – which can often be a major barrier to access. Intersections, railroads, large roads with high vehicular speeds and volumes, and steep topography are just some of the barriers to accessing and enjoying trails safely.

Key Observations:

- Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (PIB) is a major barrier due to its high volume of cars, expansive right-of-way, fast vehicular speeds, and limited pedestrian crossing opportunities.
- Numerous intersections were identified by the public as barriers to entering the study area. All these intersections are currently controlled by the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation or the Georgia Department of Transportation. Intersections that are safe and comfortable to cross for the most vulnerable users (bicyclists and pedestrians) will improve mobility and access for all Suwanee residents. The intersections identified include:
 - PIB and Eva Kennedy Road
 - PIB and Suwanee Dam Road
 - Buford Highway and Lawrenceville Suwanee Road/Suwanee Dam Road
 - Buford Highway and McGinnis Ferry Road
- There are only two at-grade crossings of the active railroad corridor within the City of Suwanee. The Russell Street railroad crossing poses the biggest barrier within the study area, with no sidewalks or formal pedestrian crossing. Coordination with the railroad will need to occur to implement any bicycle or pedestrian connection across the railroad. A second at-grade crossing is located on Suwanee Dam Road. This crossing also lacks sidewalks, but the pedestrian tunnel beneath the railroad just south of Suwanee Dam Road provides a safer alternative.

FIGURE 4. BARRIERS TO ACCESS MAP



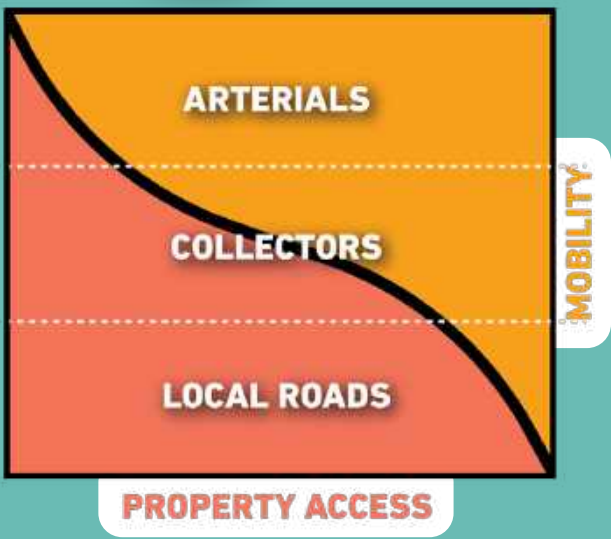
Local Road Example: White Street



Collector Example: Main St



Arterial Example: Suwanee Dam Rd



Roadway Classifications

Roadway classifications help tell the story of how people move through and within a community. Each class is based on the type of service that the road provides. Roads are generally classified into three major street types: Arterials, Collectors, and Local. Arterials, outside of highways, are the largest roads followed by collectors and local roads. Access and mobility vary within these classifications and impacts the type of adjacent land use.

Key Observations:

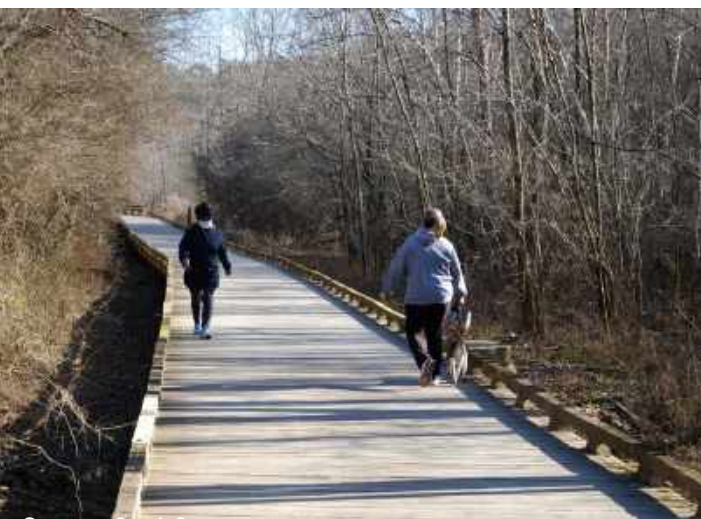
- The study area is framed by large arterials – McGinnis Ferry Road, Suwanee Dam Road, PIB, and Buford Highway. The intersections of these streets are often large and pedestrian unfriendly.
- Buford Highway, which is a GDOT road, recently underwent a transformation, as a city initiated project, as a Complete Street with on-street parking, narrower lanes, wide sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of the street on the north end and a multiuse side path on the south side, and a roundabout at Russell Street. This Complete Street effort also minimized the pedestrian crossing distance through the Town Center area.
- Most of the roads within the study area are classified as local.
- Eva Kennedy Road, Stonecypher Road, Main Street and Martin Farm Road play an important role within the study area. As collectors, they serve as internal connections to major destinations from local roads, and an alternative to the arterials.

What is a Complete Street?

A Complete Street is one that provides safe spaces to travel for all modes—walking, biking, transit, and driving— and all users, including people of all ages and abilities. Any kind of street can be a Complete Street— including local roads, collectors, and arterials— with the right design to fit the context.

FIGURE 5. ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION MAP





Trail Facilities and Access Points

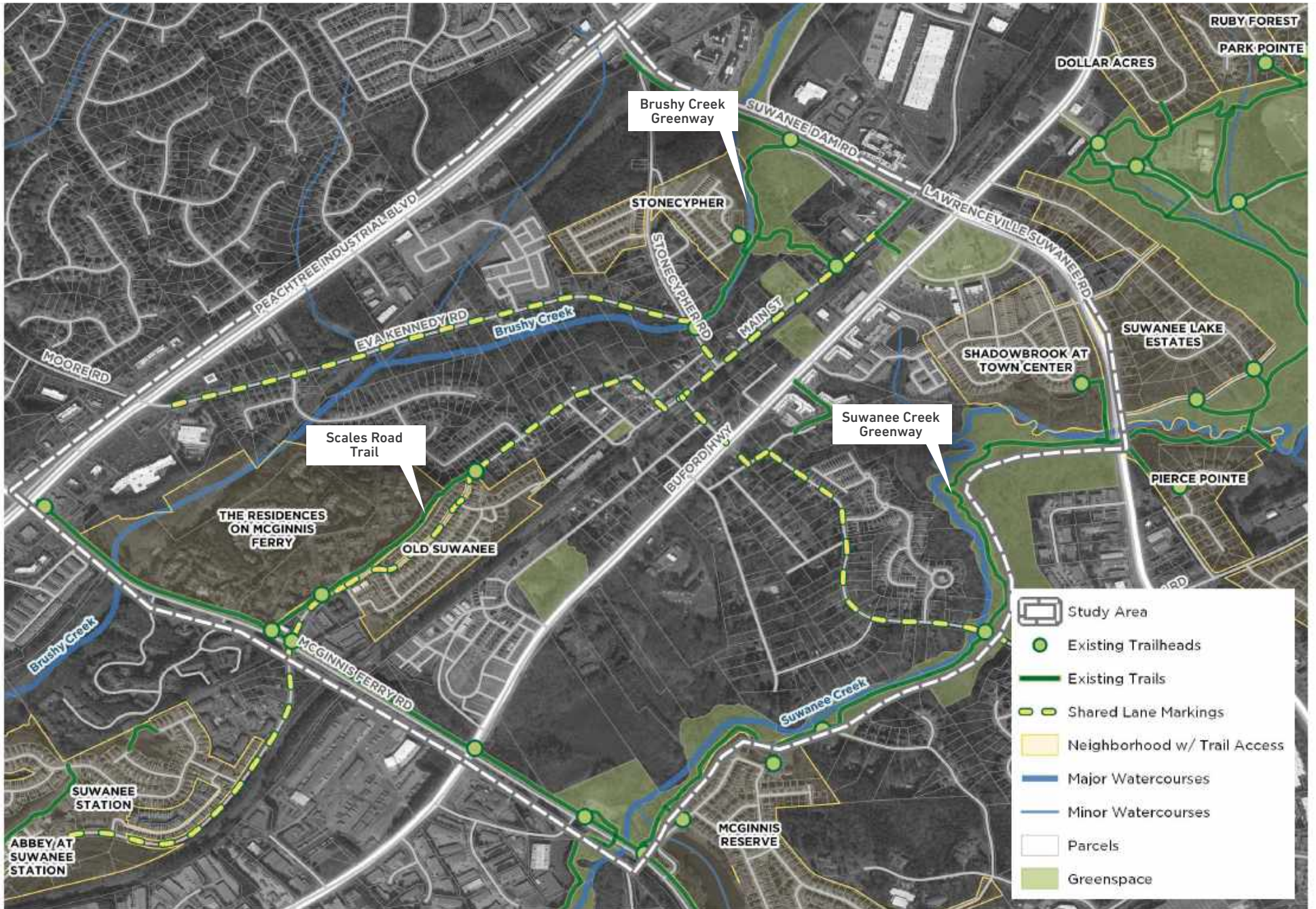
The City of Suwanee has numerous facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians. From sidewalks to sharrows and everything in between, the city has been successful in weaving together several bicycle facilities within the existing right-of-way that link community facilities. A goal of this study is to build on these investments by tying them together as a unified, safe, and comfortable multi-use loop for all users and improve access to the loop.

Key Observations:

- There are three existing trails within the study area: Suwanee Creek Greenway, Brushy Creek Greenway, and Scales Road multiuse path. Access between these facilities general relies on shared lane markings and sidewalks.
- There are several roads with shared lane markings. While these markings let motorists know that bicyclists can use the road, they are often used by only the most confident cyclists. Expanding these roads to have dedicated bicycle facilities will improve overall access and mobility for all users.
- The existing natural character of the trails was noted by many in the public as a setting they'd like to see extended to any new trails in the system.
- Pedestrian and bicycle amenities such as trash and recycling bins, lighting, benches, and bike services stations are not currently provided along the trails.
- There are multiple access points to Suwanee Creek Greenway from surrounding neighborhoods. The Scales Road facility has no formalized access point from the adjacent apartment complex.
- Consistent branding for all the facilities is needed to create a cohesive look and feel to the system.



FIGURE 6. TRAIL ACCESS MAP



Environmental Context

Suwanee’s natural amenities have attracted many to the area. The development pattern has generally worked within the challenging topography and natural systems to piece together a community that is woven into the landscape. Features like hydrology, slopes, and elevation will continue to inform future trail development, as they affect feasibility, construction costs, levels of disturbance, and facility flooding.

Hydrology

- There are two major creek systems within the study area – Brushy Creek and Suwanee Creek.
- The existing trail systems take advantage of the low-lying areas that are generally within the 100-year floodplain. Community feedback often mentioned that the natural setting of these trail systems should be expanded to other areas when appropriate.

FIGURE 7. HYDROLOGY MAP



Steep Slopes

- Much of the road network and development pattern has been structured to avoid areas where the slope exceeds 8%.
- The steepest slopes can be found along two waterways and floodplains.
- The parks and open spaces in this area take advantage of the natural topography with terraces, playground features, and view corridors.

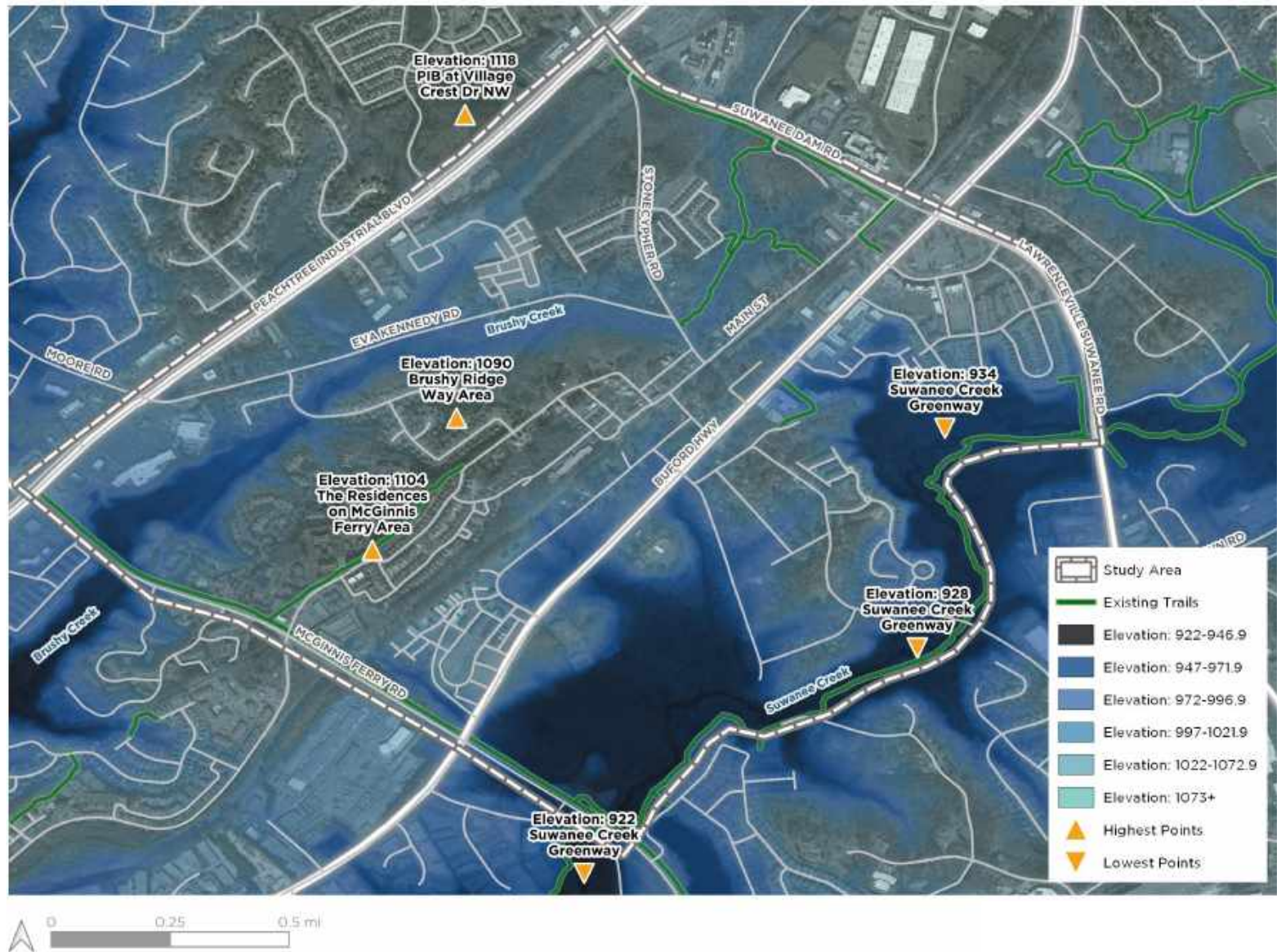
FIGURE 8. SLOPE MAP



Elevation

- There is an approximately two-hundred-foot elevation change between the highest and lowest point within the study area.
- The residential community along Scales Road has the highest elevation of development within the study area.
- The lowest elevations are along the Suwanee Creek Greenway, which are also prone to flooding during rain events.

FIGURE 9. ELEVATION MAP



3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Suwanee community was invited to help develop the preferred Loop route, consider tradeoffs for critical sidewalk projects, and give the project local flare with their ideas on trail features, amenities, and branding. In keeping with public health guidance for social distancing due to COVID-19 over the course of this project, most activities were hosted online or outdoors to keep the community safe.

WEBSITE

A dedicated website was created for this project at www.suwanee-loop.com and was advertised through the City of Suwanee website, newsletter, and social media platforms. The website included general project information, information about community engagement activities, and an option to contact the project team directly. Online activities like surveys and the community input map were also hosted on the site. There were 1,393 unique site visitors as of August 2021.

1,393

**people visited the
project website**



What are some of the key destinations, safety concerns, and trail features or amenities that should be included in the concepts?

Which of the draft alternative loop routes fits best with community priorities?

Are the construction impacts of the potential sidewalks in tricky locations worth it to the neighborhoods?

What should the loop be called and which branding option fits our personality best?

Does the community like the proposed concepts or are changes needed to get them right?

+ Website and Social Media Updates

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An Advisory Committee made up of Suwanee residents met three times throughout the project to give their insights on key issues related to the loop and sidewalk projects, review draft findings and concepts, and provide direction on project branding and community engagement strategies. Meeting minutes from each Advisory Committee meeting are available in the Appendix. Highlights included:

1

Meeting 1

March 3, 2021

The project team shared information about the existing conditions analysis and asked committee members for their opinions on desired trail amenities, concerns that should be addressed about existing trails, and aspects of Suwanee that should be highlighted in the loop brand.

2

Meeting 2

April 21, 2021

The group reviewed three alternative alignments for the loop route, including versions that focused new facilities on main roads, neighborhood connections, or in natural trail settings. They looked closely at areas with topographic constraints, like the connection from Scales Road to Eva Kennedy Road.

3

Meeting 3

June 16, 2021

After a debrief about community input received from the pop-up booths, the group reviewed a refined proposed loop route that reflected input received, including a proposed bridge concept over Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. The group also discussed the typical process and considerations for requesting improved crossings from a railroad. Consultants shared cost estimates for the loop projects and potential sidewalks and the group discussed the need to prioritize projects and implement over time.

KEY DIRECTION

- Missing sidewalks in places with safety issues like poor visibility or narrow roads and better crossings for the rail and major roads are top priorities.
- Improve flooding issues on existing trails and add features like trash cans and seating along trails.
- Create a brand that feels happy with clean and modern aesthetics.

- Desire for a grade separated crossing over Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.
- Benefits of aligning the loop with existing and future destinations like the new park on Main Street, Town Center, White Street Park, and reconstructed Buford Highway.

- Desire to implement these projects quickly and concern about a more moderate pace due to cost and negotiations.
- Interest in applying for grants and other funding sources.
- Like integrating natural elements with Suwanee's fun personality for placemaking.



Martin Farm Park



White Street Park

POP-UP BOOTHS

Staff and the consultant team set up pop-up booths at popular weekend destinations— Martin Farm Park next to the Suwanee Creek Greenway and White Street Park— to get community input on three alternative draft loop routes, as well as tradeoffs to construct potential sidewalks along portions of White Street and Martin Farm Road. Most participants thought adding a sidewalk on Martin Farm Road was worth the impacts to trees and properties.

Of the options for White Street, most people preferred a shared use path on the north side. For the loop route choices, Option 1 was the top pick.



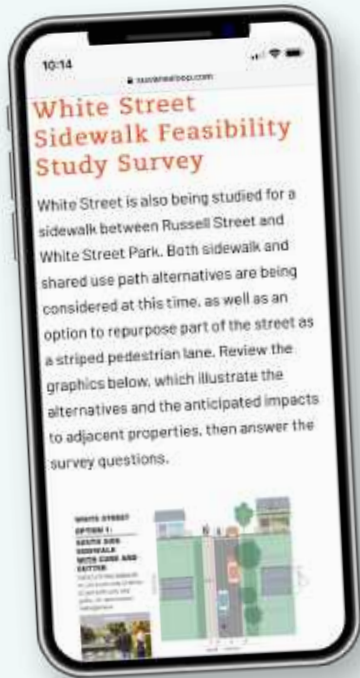
Option 1
51% VOTES



Option 2
15% VOTES



Option 3
35% VOTES



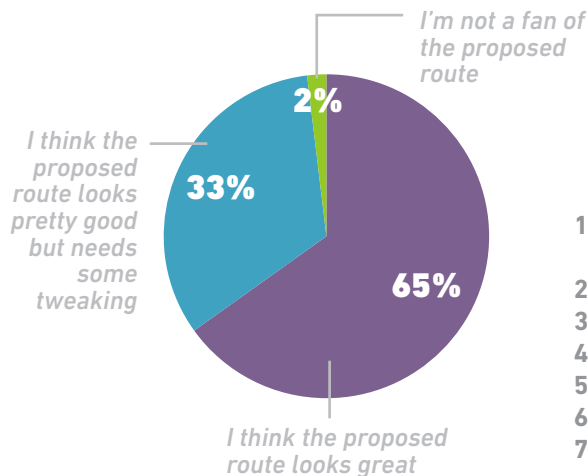
ONLINE SURVEY

After a preferred draft loop route and design concepts were created, a series of online surveys was released in May 2021, including surveys on the overall pedestrian and bicycle loop and potential sidewalks on Martin Farm Road, White Street, and Westbrook Road. Information and graphics for each project was included as part of the surveys. Participants were able to respond to all four surveys or just the ones that interested them. A total of 243 survey responses were submitted. Key takeaways are highlighted below and the complete responses to all of the surveys are available in the Appendix.

Key Loop Route Survey Results

What do you think about the proposed loop route and neighborhood connectors?

98% of respondents think the proposed route looked great or only needs tweaks.



If you think the proposed route needs some changes, what would you like to see different? (Top themes)

- Barrier/enhanced safety on McGinnis Ferry or alternative route
- Requests for neighborhood connections
- No suggestions
- Pedestrian bridge/safer crossing on Suwanee Dam Rd
- Consider following power easement/Brushy Creek

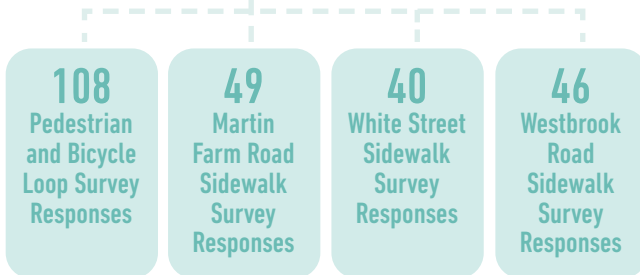
How would you prioritize the potential projects?

1. Bridge or tunnel at Peachtree Industrial Blvd with path to Eva Kennedy Rd
2. Main St shared use path
3. Path connecting Scales Rd trail to Eva Kennedy Rd
4. White St shared use path or sidewalk
5. Eva Kennedy Rd shared use path
6. Amenitizing existing trails
7. Martin Farm Rd sidewalk
8. Westbrook Rd sidewalk



243

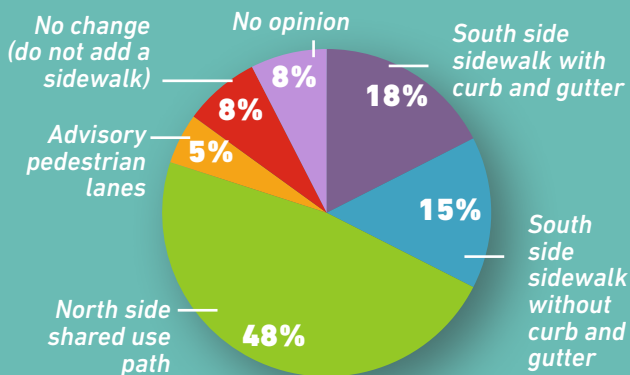
total survey responses



White Street

Which potential sidewalk or shared use path option do you prefer for White Street?

Most people (48%) prefer a shared use path on the north side.



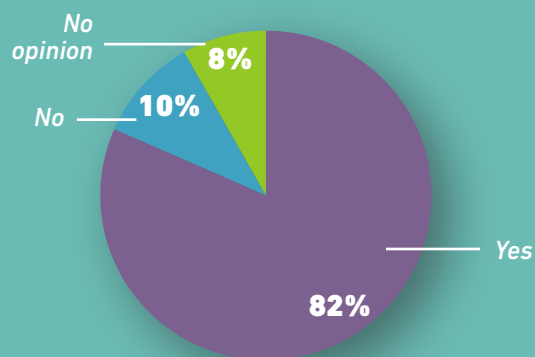
If you have concerns about this project, what are they?

- “None.”
- “The road is already quite narrow. I’d like to see it expanded a bit if a sidewalk is created.”
- “Fitting it all in! But love it!”
- “South side would seem to affect residents a little more.”

Martin Farm Road

Do you think having a continuous sidewalk on the north side of Martin Farm Road is worth the tradeoffs?

Most respondents (82%) think a sidewalk is worth it.



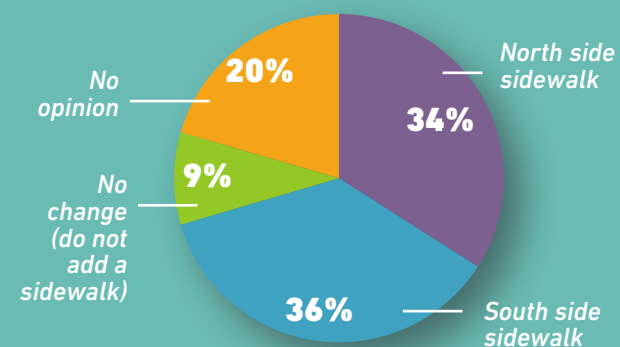
If you have concerns about this project, what are they?

- “No concerns. Highly needed.”
- “This can’t happen soon enough! I’m sad to see the trees go, but you can see the potential for huge old trees falling on power lines etc.”
- “Who will pay for this?”
- “Congestion.”

Westbrook Road

Which potential sidewalk option do you prefer for Westbrook Road?

Respondents fairly evenly favored adding a sidewalk on the north or south side.



If you have concerns about this project, what are they?

- “Drainage needs improvement along this road and a sidewalk would be great.”
- “Nope! Build away.”
- “This should wait until the County is done with the Ivy Creek connection to George Pierce Park.”

TYPICAL COMMENTS

COMMUNITY INPUT MAP

The city hosted an online community input map to gather location-specific public comments on the proposed loop. The online map illustrated the draft proposed loop route as of May 20, 2021, including both existing and newly proposed trail segments. Respondents were asked to review the proposed route and drop pins on a map to give feedback on the following categories:

MAP FEATURE TYPES



Places I'd like the loop to connect to



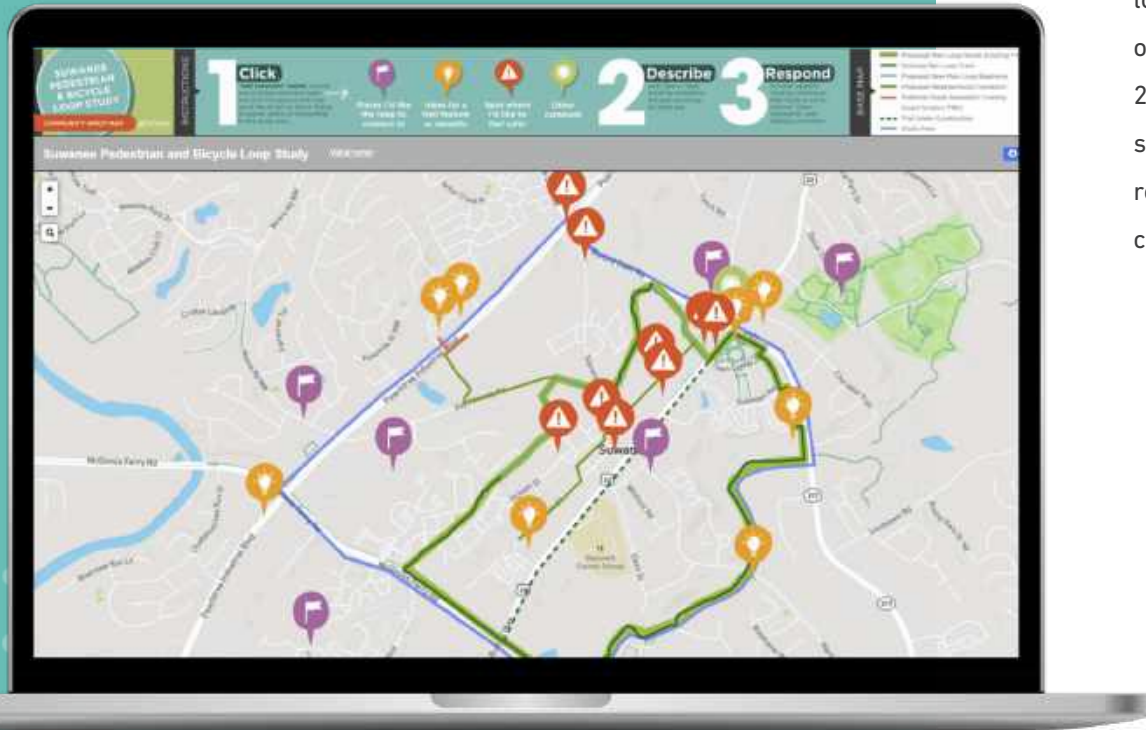
Ideas for a trail feature or amenity



Spot where I'd like to feel safer



Other



After placing a pin, participants were prompted to answer a multiple choice question to categorize the nature of their response and had the option to write in a specific description of their thoughts. Respondents were also able to view and respond to other people's comments on the map.

The map was open from May 21 to June 15, 2021. It was hosted on the Wikimapping platform and featured on the project website, suwaneeloop.com, along with descriptions and graphics outlining the draft proposed loop route. Community members were invited to participate through the project mailing list and posts to the city's social media pages.

60 unique respondents contributed to the community input map. There were a total of 77 comments submitted, including both original comments and responses to content submitted by other respondents. Their feedback is illustrated in the maps on the following pages.

Key feedback themes included:

- Increasing comfortable connections for neighborhoods that are located on the other side of major roads like Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, Suwanee Dam Road/Lawrenceville Suwanee Road, and McGinnis Ferry Road, including requests for pedestrian bridges or tunnels.
- Safety improvements at major intersections, including consistent provision of crosswalks in all directions.
- Reconsidering designs that are confusing to users, such as the HAWK signal at Buford Highway and Town Center Avenue.
- Slowing vehicle speeds and increasing visibility of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Encouraging more unique, locally-owned restaurants and shops along the route.
- Additional small-scale amenities like safety call boxes, restrooms, and water stations.
- Additional parking and/or more intentional utilization of existing publicly-owned lots in the area.

60
respondents

77
comments

91%
live in
Suwanee

FIGURE 10. MAP RESULTS - PLACES I'D LIKE THE LOOP TO CONNECT TO

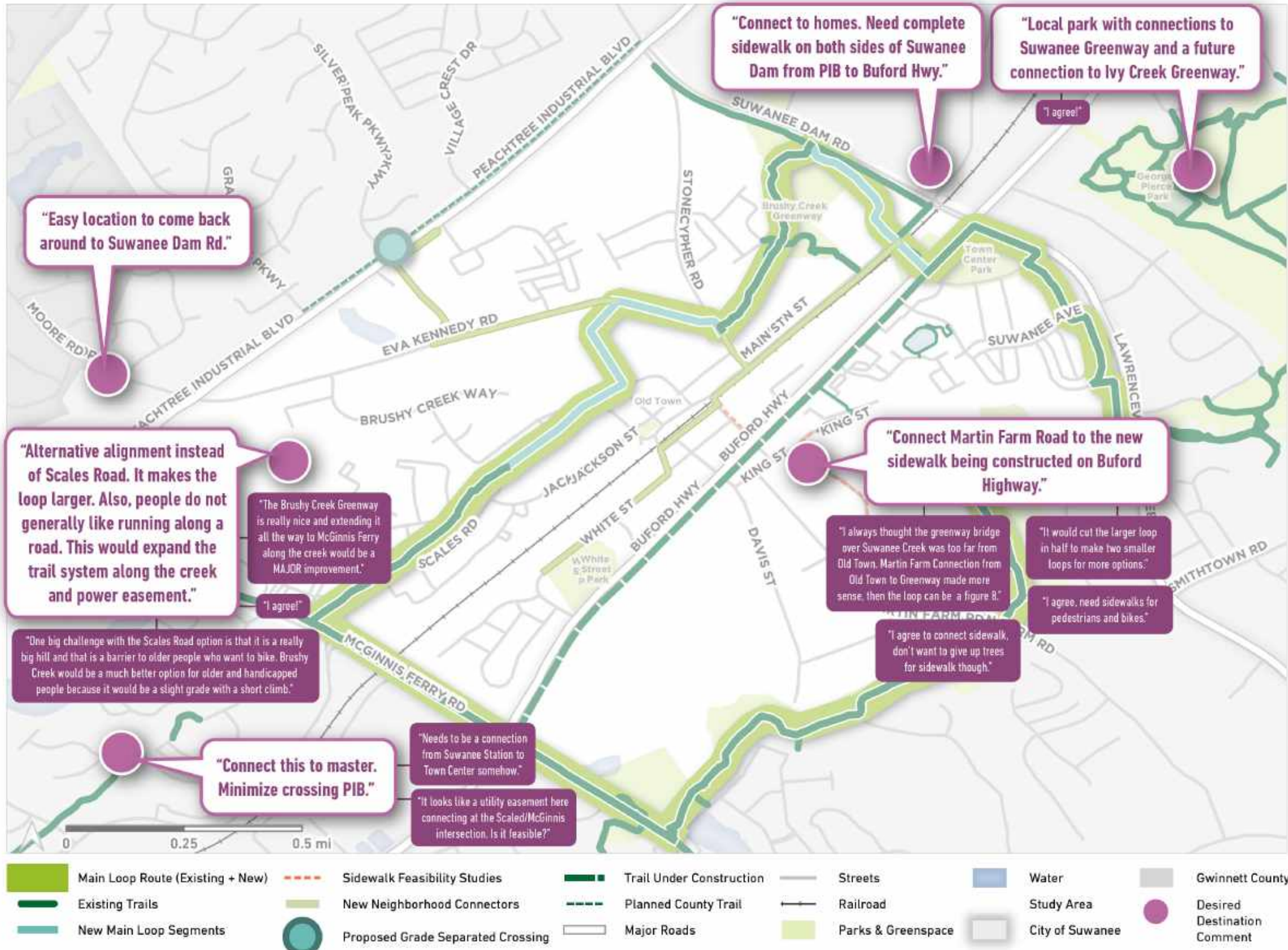


FIGURE 11. MAP RESULTS - IDEAS FOR TRAIL FEATURES OR AMENITIES

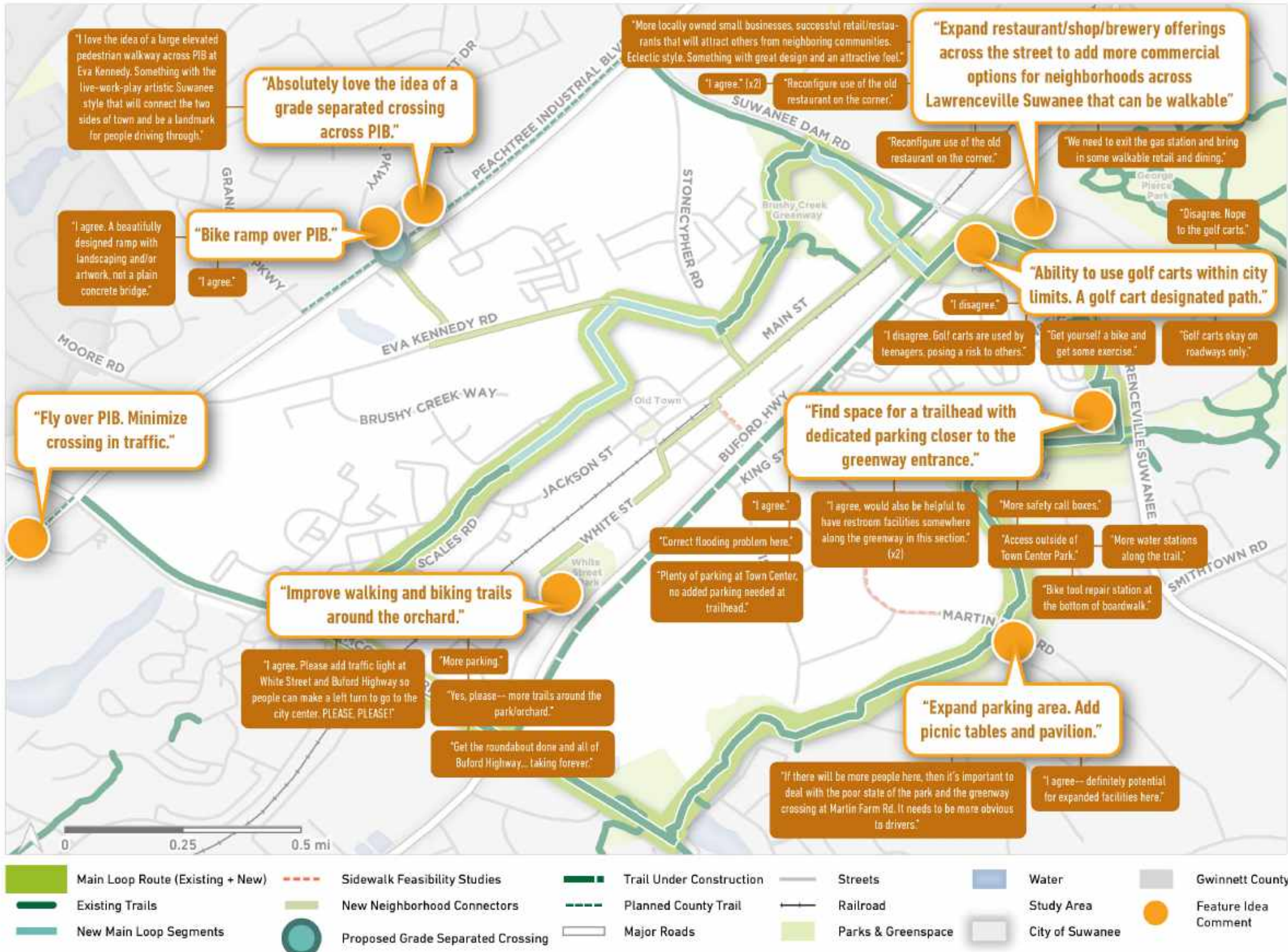
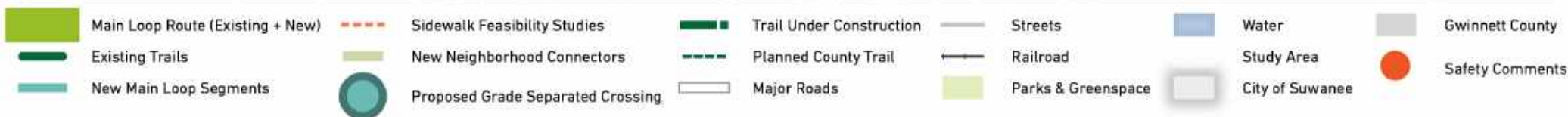
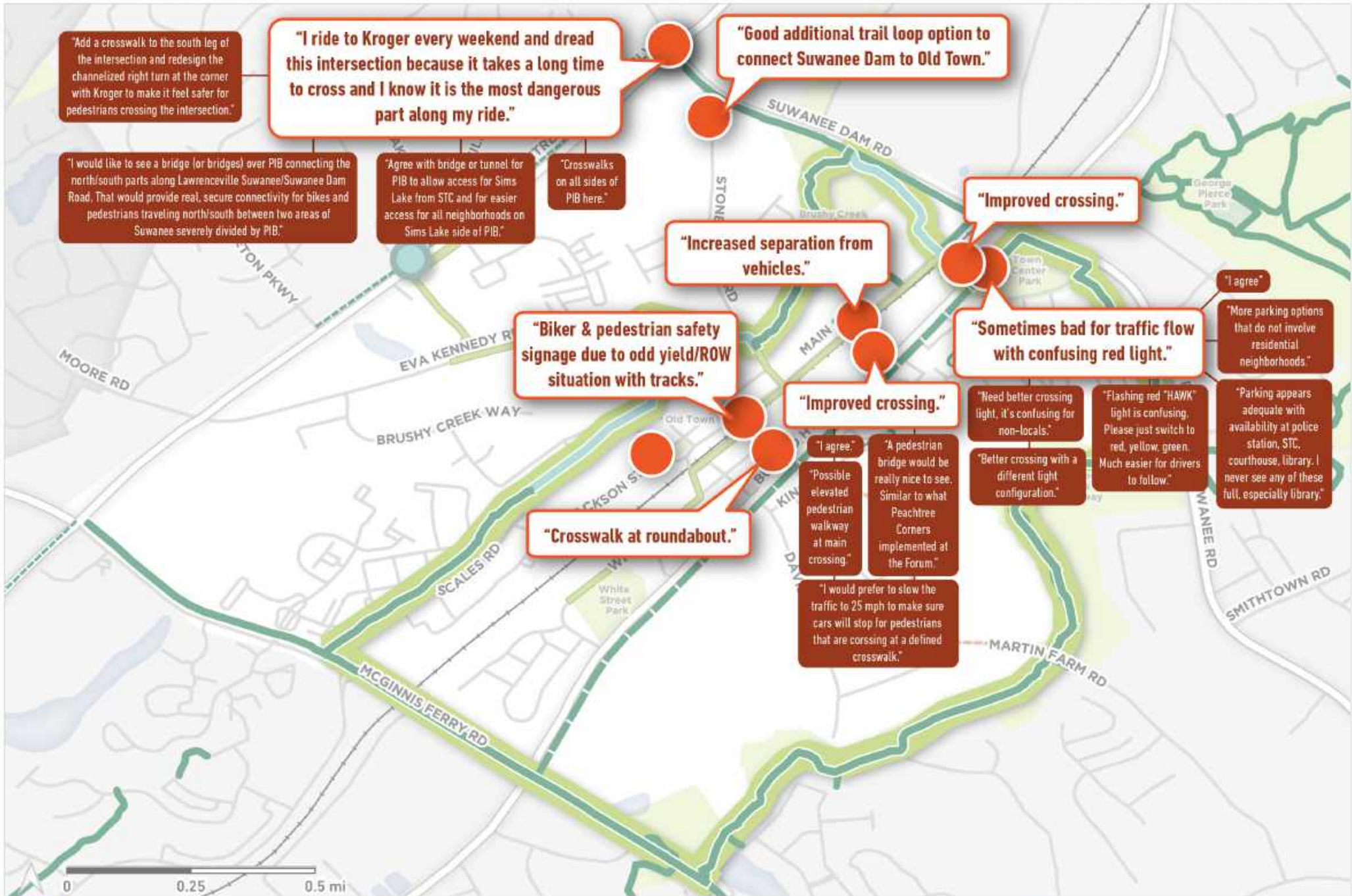


FIGURE 12. MAP RESULTS - PLACES I'D LIKE TO FEEL SAFER



OPEN HOUSE

The community was invited to an open house at City Hall on July 8, 2021 to review the revised draft concepts. Staff and the consultant team talked to attendees about:

- Community input to date;
- How the proposed loop route had been developed and revised;
- The recommended concepts for the sidewalk feasibility studies;
- Placemaking ideas to give the loop a unique Suwanee feel;
- Cost estimates; and
- Draft logos and name ideas for branding the loop.

Some of the feedback received from attendees included:

- Excitement about the proposed pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, as well as some concerns about cost.
- Desire for lighting to increase usability on winter evenings.
- Need for seating and rest areas.
- Need audible pedestrian signals at key intersections.
- Interest in separating pedestrians and cyclists or adding a center stripe on the path.
- Interest in a bridge over Suwanee Dam Road near Kroger.
- Sidewalks for White Street and Martin Farm Road near King Street as key safety concerns that should be prioritized.
- Naming ideas like “Suwanee Pulse” and “The Flow.”





4 SIDEWALKS



SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks play an important role in a community's mobility, particularly in Suwanee where there are many families with young children and a population that puts great emphasis on their health and wellness. Creating a network of sidewalks allows for safe and comfortable access to community amenities for everyone, regardless of age or ability. However, many of the city's older streets lack sidewalks. This study included looking at the feasibility, costs, and potential impacts of four sidewalk projects that could provide key connections to the Suwanee loop and other regional trails. These include:

1. **White Street** from White Street Park to Russell Street
2. **Russell Street** from Main Street to Buford Highway
3. **Martin Farm Road** from Buford Highway to the Suwanee Creek Greenway
4. **Westbrook Road** from Smithtown Road to the proposed Ivy Creek Greenway

What We Heard

SIDEWALKS

“Sidewalks on Martin Farm Road would be great!”

“With the hill [on Martin Farm Road] and the speed that some drive, it feels a bit dangerous with our kids. Even if the sidewalk isn’t possible, some kind of speed bump or deterrent would be wonderful.”

“[My concern about the project is] that trees would be cut down.”

““There are a lot of pedestrians on White Street now with the new neighborhood. Having a sidewalk will improve safety for kids, strollers, adults. White Street is already very narrow so we need it badly.”

“I would love a way to walk on [White Street] with my family. We have two young kids and a large dog and when cars come by it’s a VERY tight squeeze! Would love this walking path/sidewalk.”

“I think it will greatly improve walkability of Martin Farm. The corner at King Street is currently very dangerous to pedestrians.”

“Drainage needs improvement along this Westbrook Road and a sidewalk would be great.”

“I don’t have any concerns about the proposed projects”

“How is this going to be paid for?”

“No concerns! Build away!”

“This would be a very nice addition [to Westbrook Road] because it is currently a dangerous stretch from Morningview to Smithtown Road.”



Existing

SIDEWALK FEASIBILITY STUDY
WHITE STREET

White Street is currently undergoing transformation with new residential development and the increased popularity of White Street Park. There is a demand for a sidewalk along the narrow local street, but there is also concern about preserving the character that makes White Street unique and quaint, which is derived from the tree canopy and its rural nature.

Design Alternatives

The community was presented with several sidewalk alternatives, all of which required some right-of-way acquisition and mature tree removal. These alternatives ranged from a typical sidewalk on one side with curb and gutter (Option 1) to advisory sidewalks (Option 4).

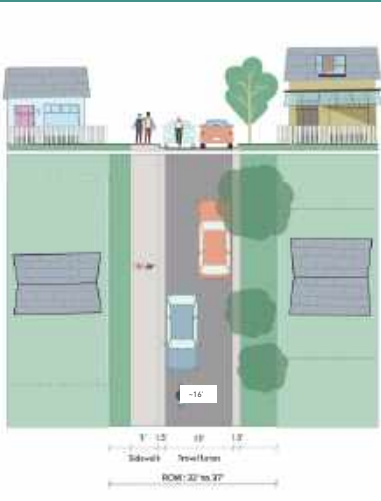
Key Challenges

- ▶ Narrow right-of-way, specifically between Russell Street and Davis Street
- ▶ Mature trees adjacent to right-of-way
- ▶ Steep topography along the corridor

White Street Sidewalk Design Alternatives

OPTION 1: SOUTH SIDE SIDEWALK WITH CURB AND GUTTER

Install a 5-foot sidewalk on the south side with curb and gutter for stormwater management.



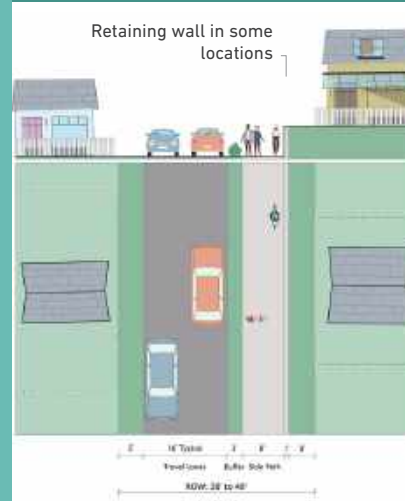
OPTION 2: SOUTH SIDE SIDEWALK WITHOUT CURB AND GUTTER

Install a 5-foot sidewalk on the south side with a 2-foot grass buffer and no curb or gutter.



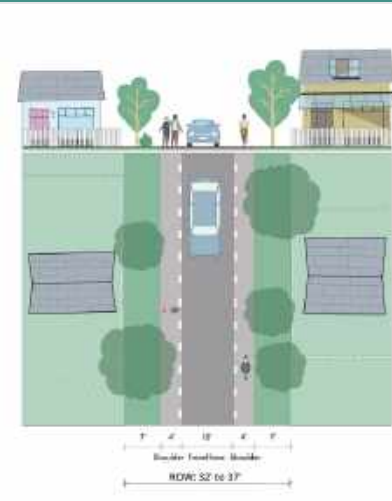
OPTION 3: NORTH SIDE SHARED USE PATH

Install an 8-foot shared use path for both pedestrians and cyclists on the north side, which would likely require a retaining wall in some steep locations.



OPTION 4: ADVISORY PEDESTRIAN LANES

Repurpose part of the street for striped pedestrian lanes on both sides. Between Russell Street and Davis Street, White Street would need to become a one-way (northbound) to fit the advisory pedestrian lanes.



**+ OPTION 5:
NO CHANGE**

TYPICAL SECTIONS

FACILITY EXAMPLES



SIDEWALK FEASIBILITY STUDY
WHITE STREET

Anticipated Impacts

Anticipated property impacts due to construction and/or implementation were identified for each alternative. This included potential removal of mature trees (noted in red), site disturbance (grading), and right-of-way acquisition needed for construction of the facility, which may include retaining walls (blue and yellow lines).

FIGURE 13. ANTICIPATED PROPERTY IMPACTS FOR PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (OPTION 3) MAPS - WHITE STREET

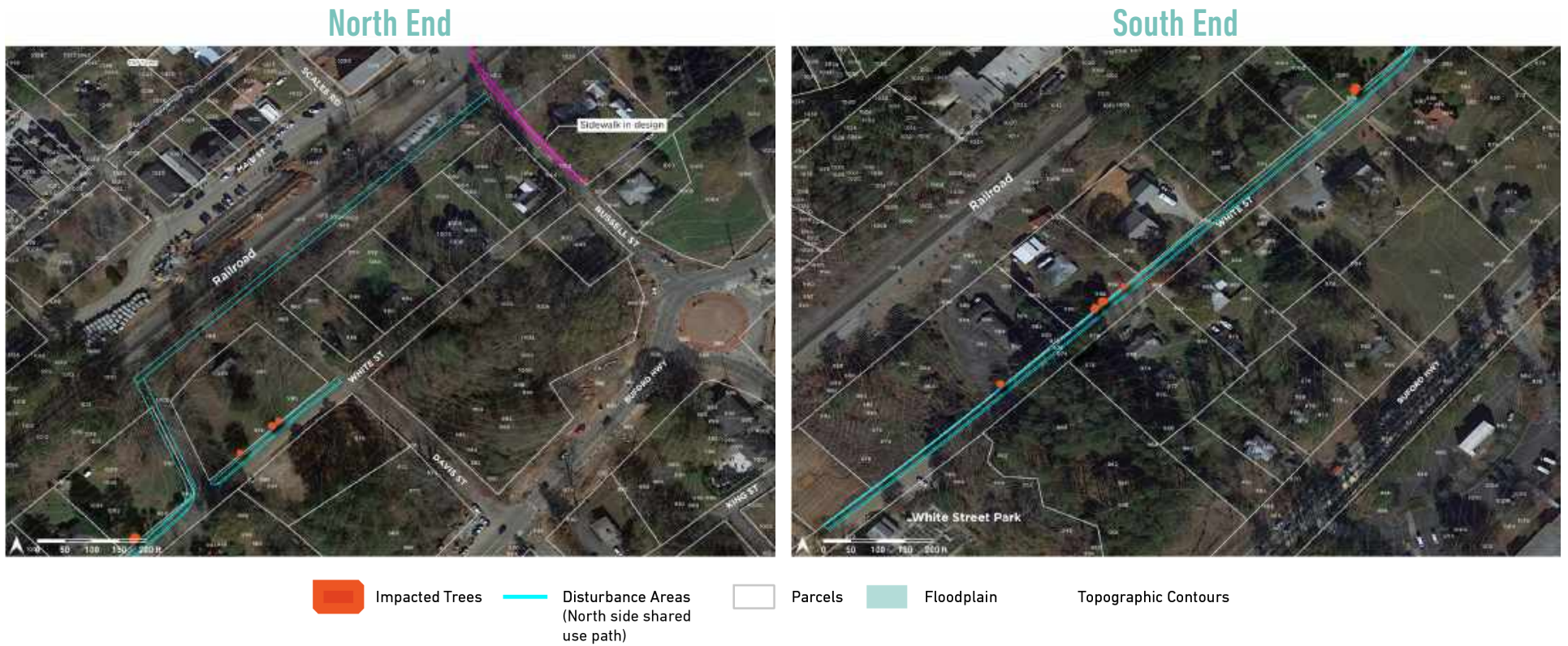


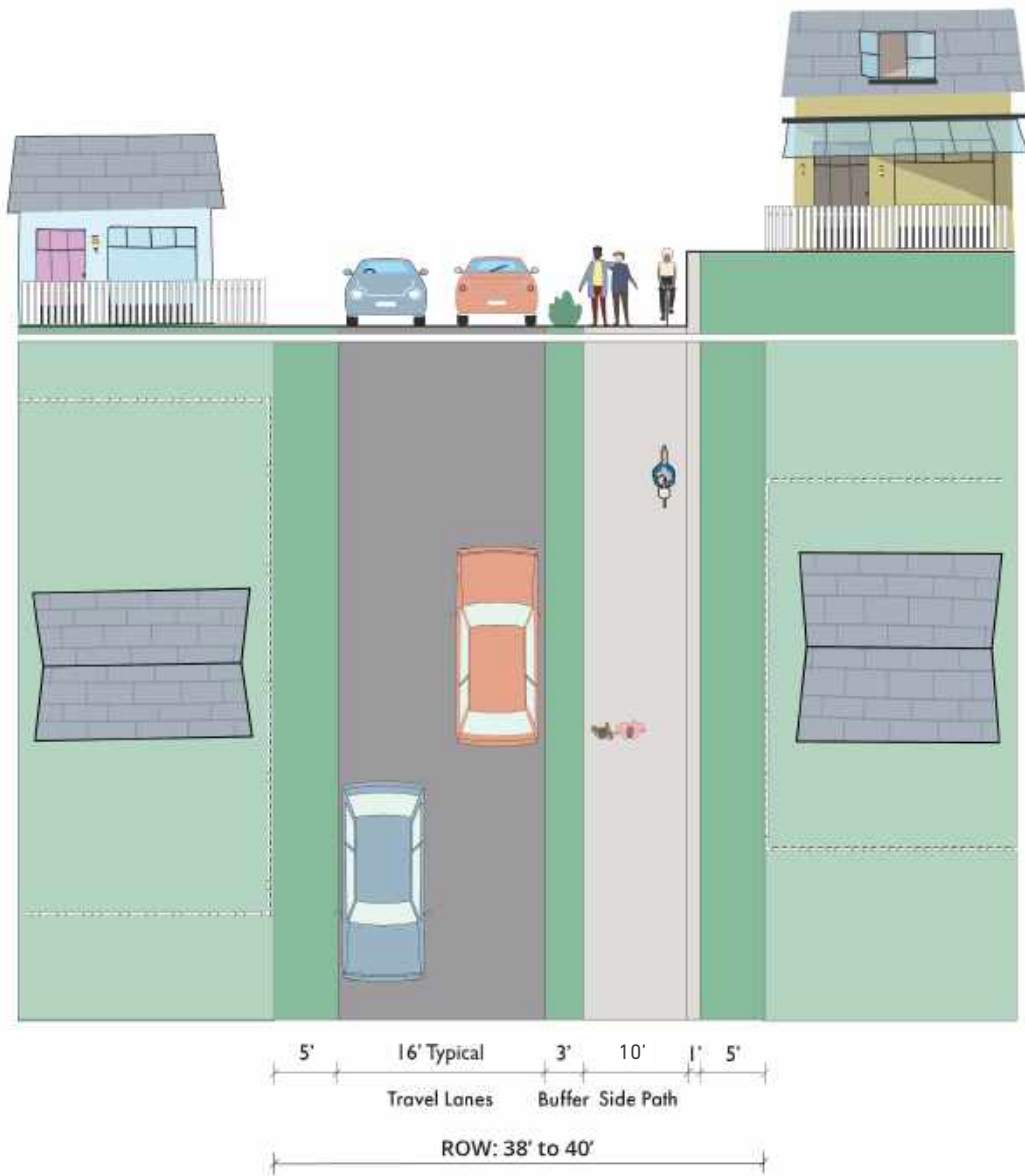
FIGURE 14. TYPICAL PROPOSED SECTION - WHITE STREET

The community voiced a preference for a 10-foot shared use path on the north side with a landscaped buffer. Due to the narrow right-of-way between Russell Street and Davis Street and the limited visibility at the Russell Street intersection, a path parallel to the railroad is recommended for the portion of White Street between Russell Street and Main Street NW.

White Street Cost Estimate Summary

10-foot concrete shared use path on north side (0.49 mile)	\$2,160,000
Utility Pole Relocation - Add on	\$89,400
Underground Utility Relocation - Add on	\$1,420,000

See full cost estimate in the Appendix for assumptions





Existing

SIDEWALK FEASIBILITY STUDY **RUSSELL STREET**

Russell Street is a critical link between Old Town Suwanee and the revamped Buford Highway, but there are currently no sidewalks on Russell Street. This sidewalk project is already in Suwanee’s work program. The purpose of inclusion in this study was to generate an accurate cost estimate and conceptual design to move the project forward. To connect to Main Street, the sidewalk will have

to cross the railroad tracks. Due to coordination required with Norfolk Southern, the portion of the sidewalk across the railroad is packaged as part of a separate project (see page page 72).

Anticipated Impacts

Grading and mature tree removal will be required for implementation.

Key Challenges

- ▶ Narrow right-of-way
- ▶ Mature trees adjacent to right-of-way
- ▶ Steep topography along the corridor
- ▶ Significant coordination with Norfolk Southern to extend across tracks to Main Street

Preferred Design

The proposed project is to install a 5-foot sidewalk and retaining wall on the northeast side of Russell Street between Buford Highway and the railroad.

Russell Street Cost Estimate Summary

5-foot sidewalk (northeast side) (0.1 miles)	\$403,000
Add on: Utility relocation	\$14,900
Add on: Rail crossing (Trail Project G)	\$352,450

See full cost estimate in the Appendix for assumptions

FIGURE 15. RUSSELL STREET PROPOSED SIDEWALK LOCATION





SIDEWALK FEASIBILITY STUDY **MARTIN FARM ROAD**

Martin Farm Road serves as an important connection between Buford Highway, the Suwanee Creek Greenway, Martin Farm Park, and Satellite Boulevard. Within the study area the corridor is mainly composed of single-family homes, significant topography, and mature trees. Newer residential development has required sidewalks, however there are critical sidewalk gaps missing along the corridor. A new bridge across Suwanee Creek will include a sidewalk on the north side and fill the sidewalk gap between the bridge and the greenway. This

project, which is funded by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is scheduled for 2022 construction.

Design Alternatives and Preferred Design

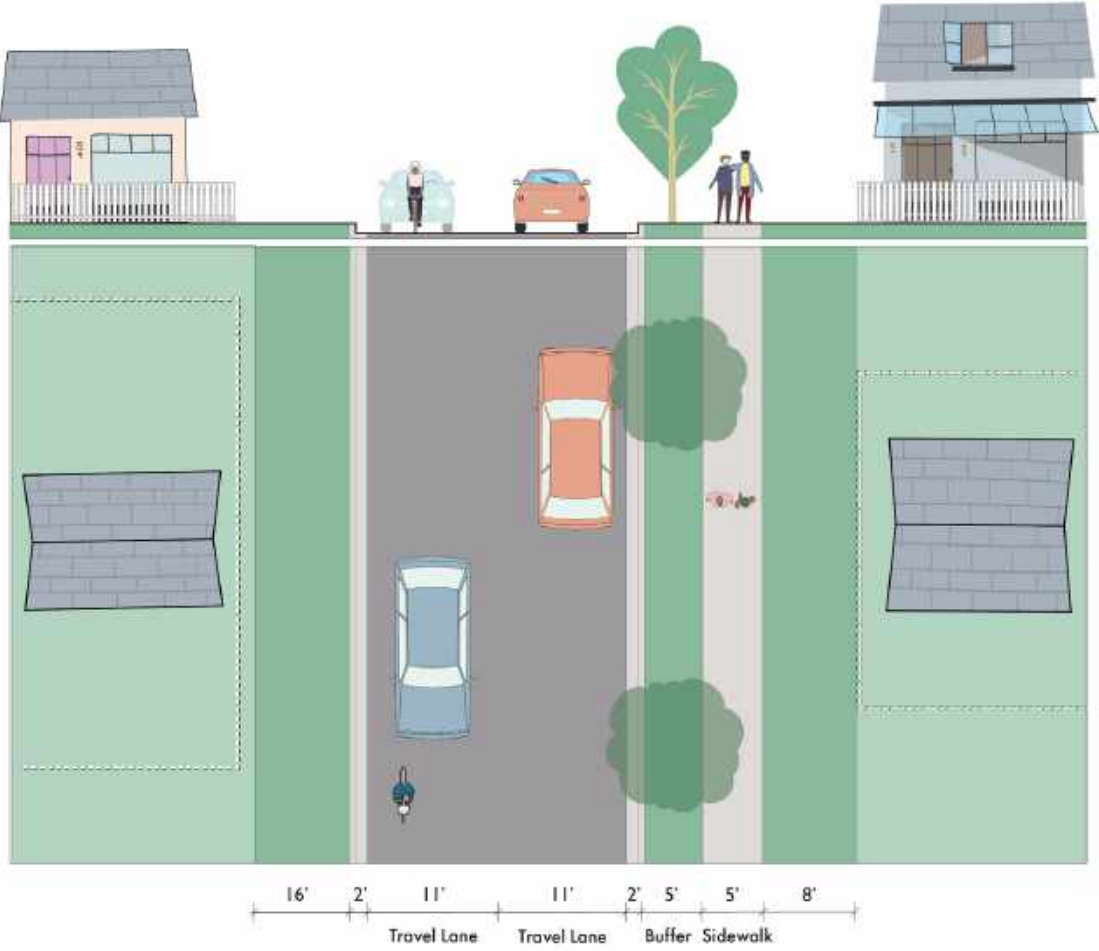
Throughout the community process two options were presented: install a 5-foot sidewalk on the north side with curb and gutter with the acknowledgement that many mature trees would likely be removed, and property would be impacted;

or preserve the trees and do not add a sidewalk. The community expressed a desire to move forward with implementing a sidewalk on the north side.

Key Challenges

- ▶ Mature trees adjacent to or within the right-of-way
- ▶ Steep topography along the corridor

FIGURE 16. TYPICAL PROPOSED STREET SECTION - MARTIN FARM ROAD



Martin Farm Road Cost Estimate Summary

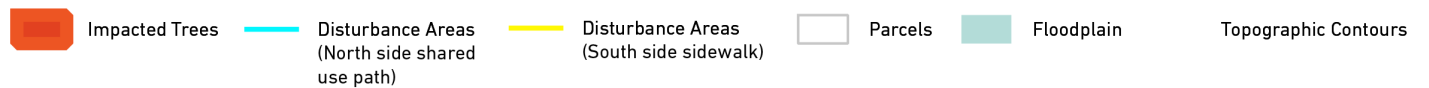
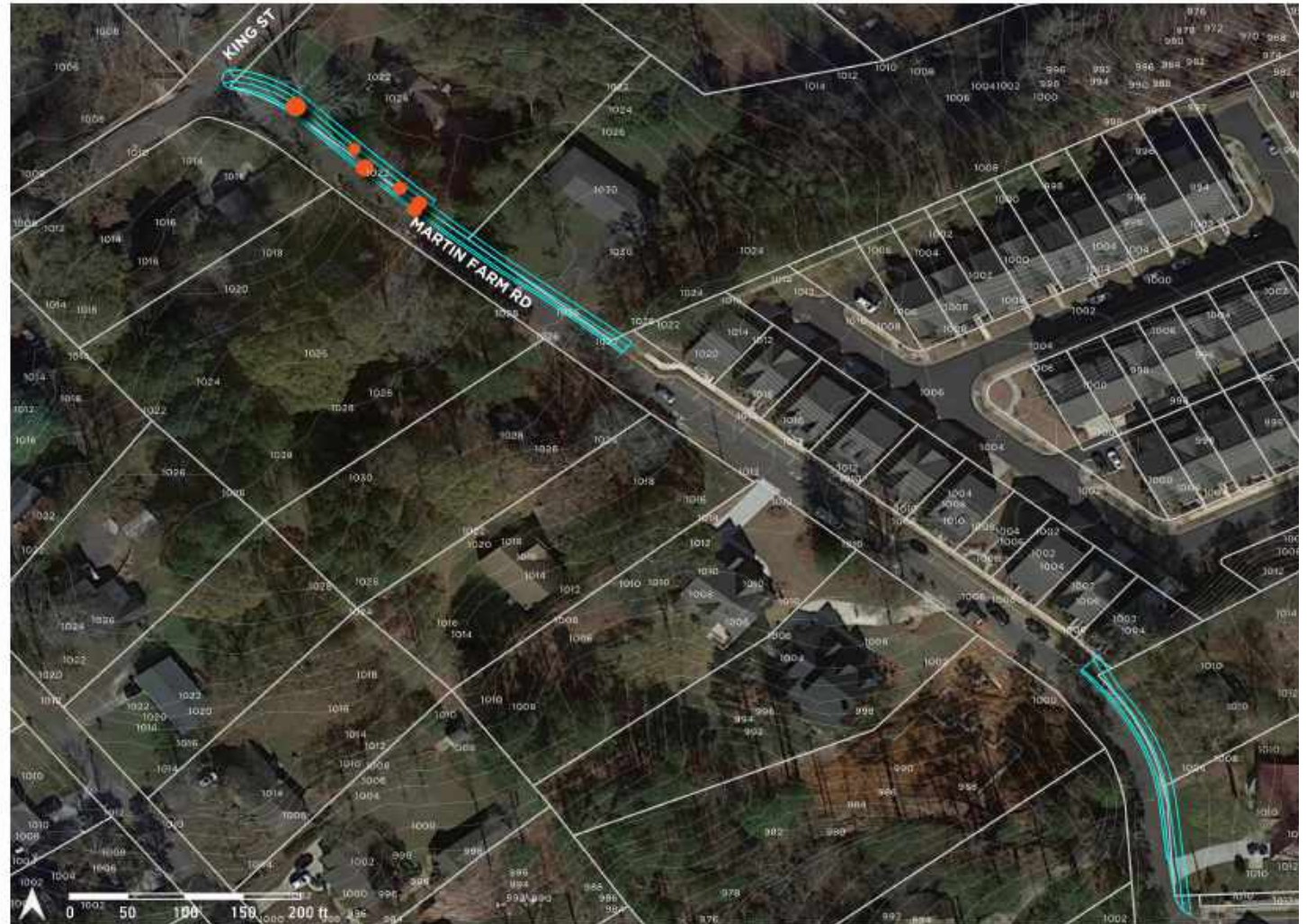
5-foot sidewalk (northeast side) (0.67 miles)	\$1,878,000
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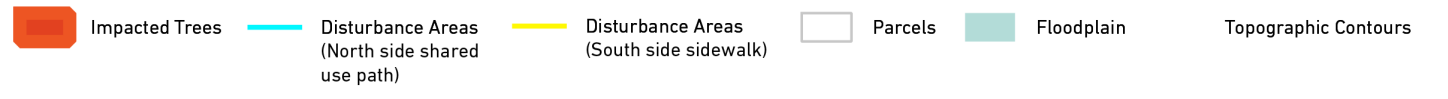
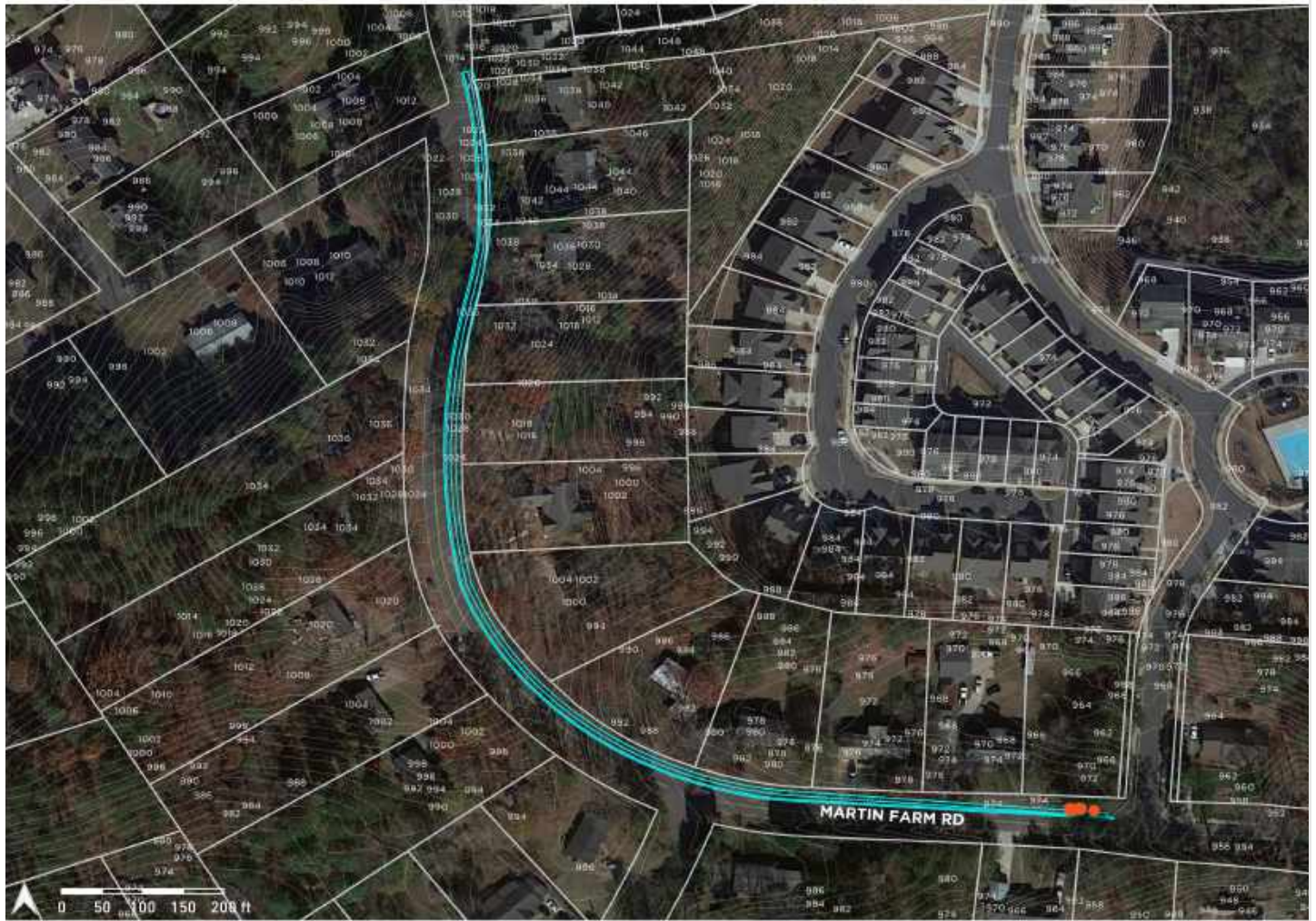
See full cost estimate in the Appendix for assumptions.

FIGURE 17. ANTICIPATED PROPERTY IMPACTS - MARTIN FARM ROAD

Anticipated Impacts

Anticipated property impacts along Martin Farm Road. Anticipated property impacts due to construction and/or implementation were identified for the 5-foot sidewalk implementation. This included removal of mature trees (noted in red) and site disturbance (grading) and right-of-way acquired in anticipation for construction of the facility which may include retaining walls (blue and lines).







Existing

SIDEWALK FEASIBILITY STUDY **WESTBROOK ROAD**

Westbrook Road is a well-traveled road that extends from Smithtown Road to the city's eastern boundary. The County is planning an extension of the Ivy Creek Greenway that will cross beneath Westbrook Road to connect to George Pierce Park. A sidewalk on Westbrook Road could help connect Suwanee's pedestrian network to the Ivy Creek Trail. The corridor currently has high-vehicular speeds,

large-lot single family residences, steep topography, and no sidewalks.

Design Alternatives

Two design alternatives – on one the north and the other on the south side- were presented to the community. Both designs include a 5-foot sidewalk with landscaped buffer, and curb and gutter.

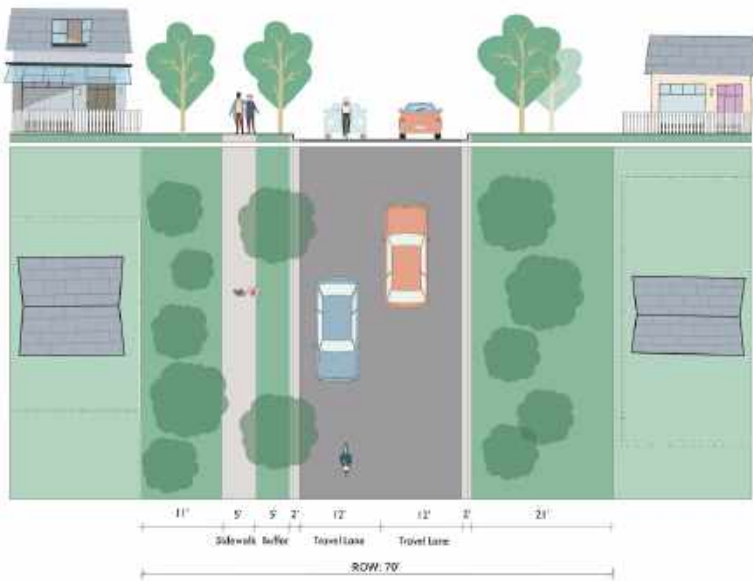
Key Challenges

- ▶ Steep topography along the corridor present drainage and grading challenges
- ▶ Possible tree removal

Westbrook Road Sidewalk Design Alternatives

OPTION 1: SIDEWALK ON NORTH SIDE

Sidewalk on north side and design includes a 5-foot sidewalk with landscaped buffer, and curb and gutter. Both will require grading, drainage, and potential tree removal.



OPTION 2: SIDEWALK ON SOUTH SIDE

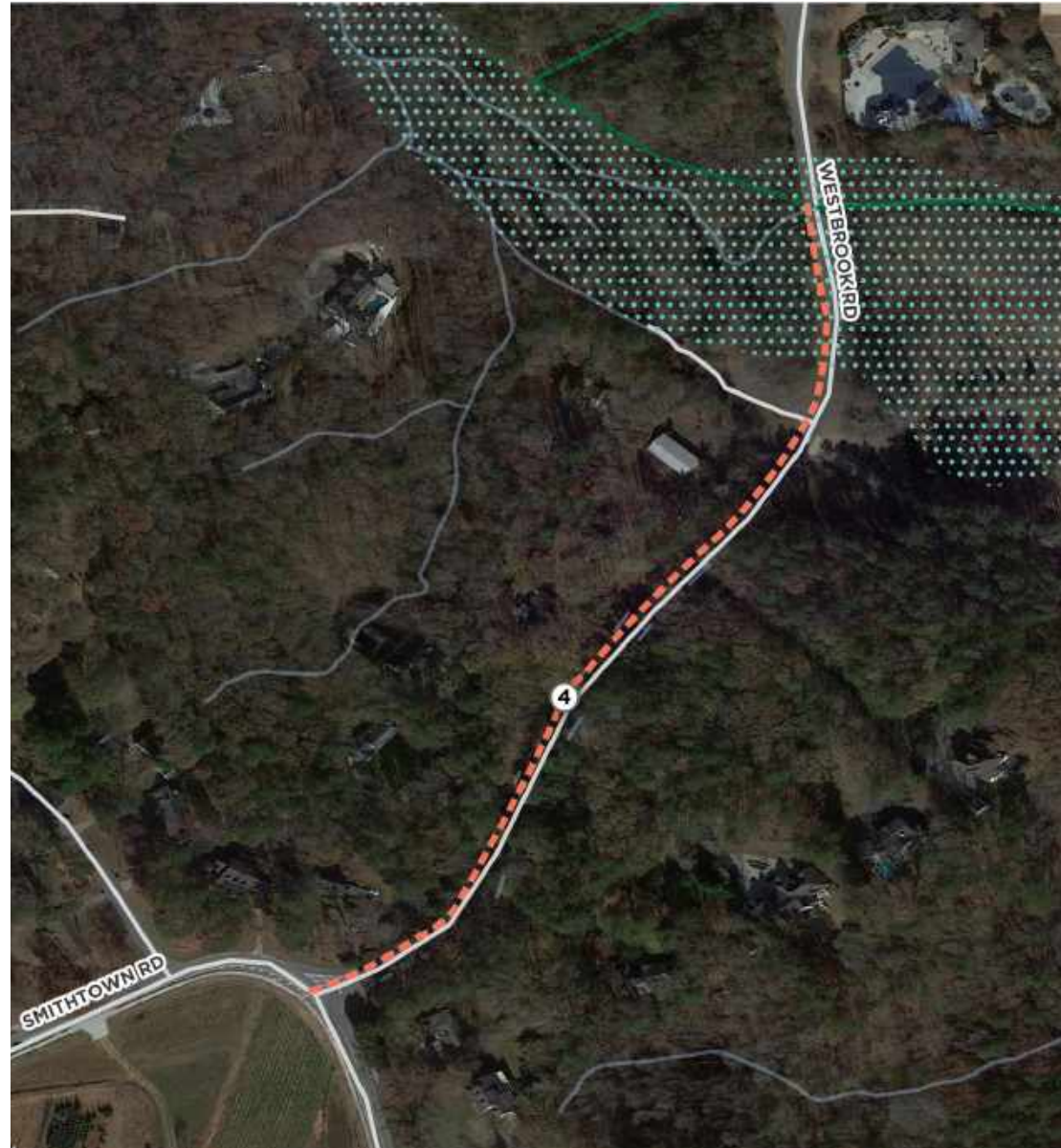
Sidewalk on south side and design includes a 5-foot sidewalk with landscaped buffer, and curb and gutter. Both will require grading, drainage, and potential tree removal.



FIGURE 18. WESTBROOK ROAD PROPOSED SIDEWALK LOCATION

Anticipated Impacts

Both design alternatives would require grading, drainage, and potential tree removal.



Preferred Design

The preference by the community was to install a 5-foot sidewalk on the north side of the road to tie directly into the planned access point for the Ivy Creek Greenway and the existing sidewalk segment on the north side of the bridge over Ivy Creek.

Westbrook Road Cost Estimate Summary

5-foot sidewalk (north side) (0.29 miles)

\$1,348,000

See full cost estimate in the Appendix for assumptions

FIGURE 20. TYPICAL PROPOSED STREET SECTION - WESTBROOK ROAD

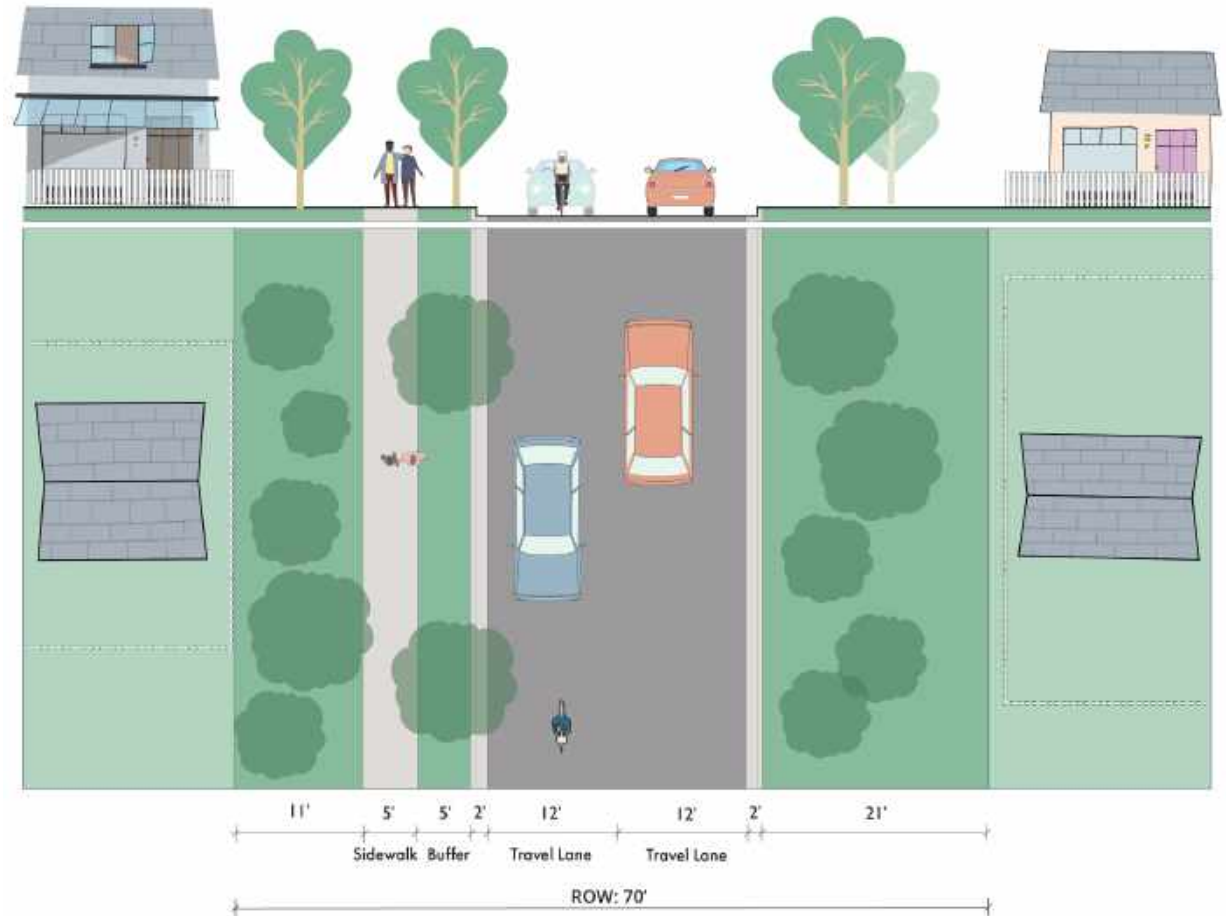
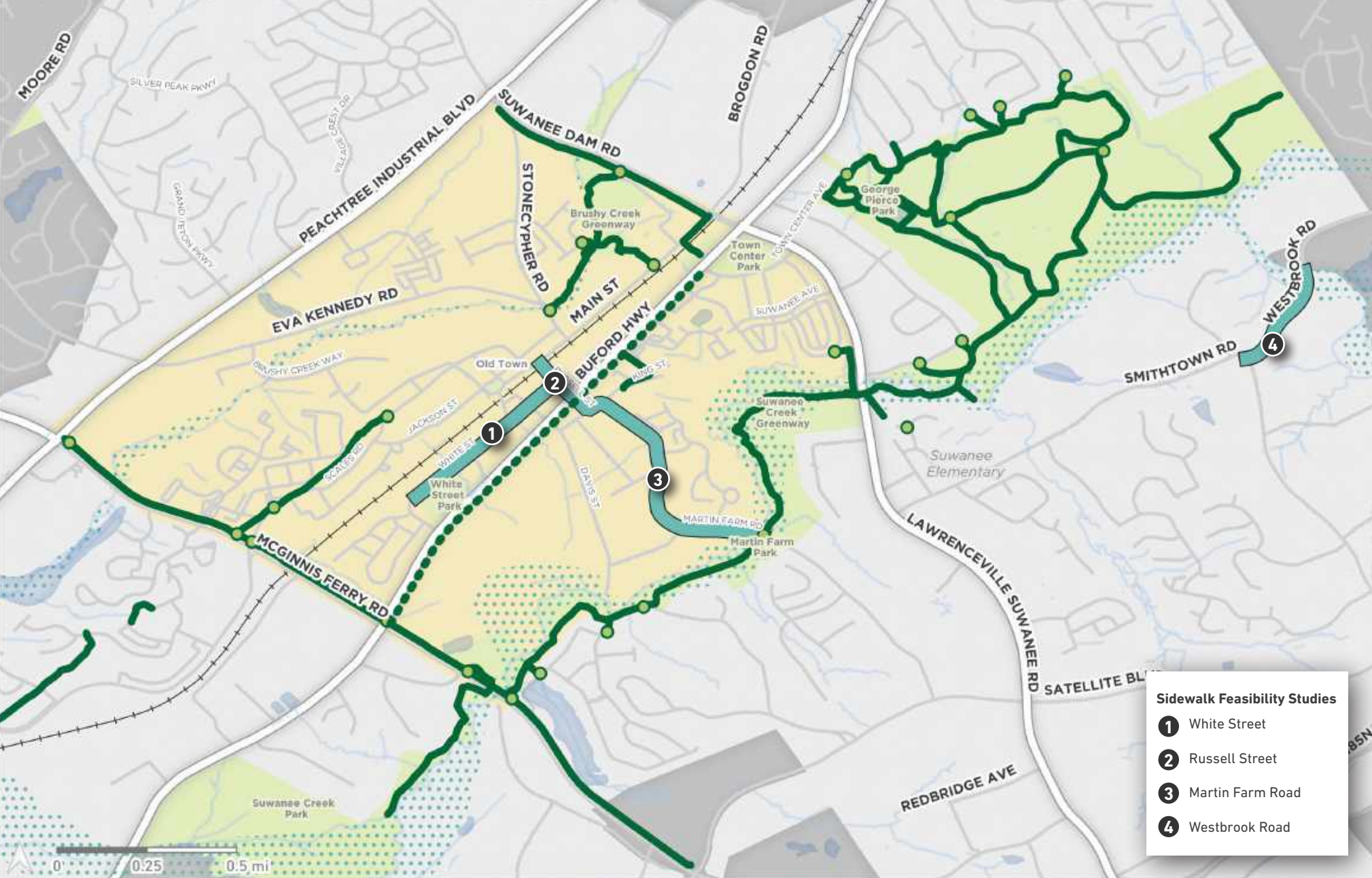


FIGURE 19. SIDEWALK FEASIBILITY STUDY PROJECT LOCATIONS



- Sidewalk Feasibility Studies**
- ① White Street
 - ② Russell Street
 - ③ Martin Farm Road
 - ④ Westbrook Road

	Existing Trails		Existing Trail Access		Major Roads		Parks & Greenspace		Floodplain		Gwinnett County
	Trail Under Construction		Sidewalk Feasibility Study		Streets		Water		Study Area		City of Suwanee



5

TRAILS

TRAILS

The City of Suwanee loves their trails. A signature trail loop route throughout Suwanee will tie together the existing Suwanee Creek Greenway, Brushy Creek Greenway, and Scales Road Trail along with new trail segments to create opportunities for people to continuously walk and bike throughout the city, an asset that will support healthy living, sustainable transportation options, and places for fun and community connection. Figure 21

illustrates the proposed 5.14-mile loop route, supported by neighborhood connections that expand safe and convenient access to the trail system for all residents. The proposed route was developed based on community input— summarized in Section 3— and technical analysis, including critical considerations around the railroad, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, and locations with topographical constraints.



Suwanee Creek Greenway

What We Heard

TRAILS

“More access to Town Center by biking or walking will help attract the community to the space.”

“It should be a bridge so people don’t cross Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.”

“Tie into the neighborhoods on Moore Road across PIB [and Morningview, Suwanee Green, Maple Ridge, Forest Plantation, and Stoneridge]

“How can we safely connect the communities across PIB and Suwanee Dam with Suwanee proper?”

“Incorporate White Street more and connect it to the main arteries.”

“Avoiding busy roads.”

“I’d like to suggest keeping some gravel/grass open next to the path so runners who’d like a soft surface have that option.”

“Maximize connectivity to existing paths, towns, and neighborhoods.”

“It would be nice to use the Georgia Power transmission easement through Brushy Creek as a connecting trail.”

“Safer way to cross Peachtree Industrial Boulevard at Suwanee Dam Road”

“My main concern is the long segment along McGinnis Ferry. It is noisy and hot. Can the path be moved away from the road?”

PROPOSED ROUTE SUMMARY

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

WHAT
WHERE

Existing Trails	+	New Main Loop Segments	+	New Neighborhood Connectors
<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brushy Creek Greenway (0.49 mi) C 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) 		<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Jackson Street Path (0.57 mi) D McGinnis Ferry Trail Connection (0.08 mi) F Stonecypher Road Path (0.1 mi) G Railroad Crossing (0.02 mi) H Alternative: Wetland Crossing (0.8 mi) I Town Center on Main Path (0.27 mi) 		<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 White Street & Rail Corridor Path (see page 42) (0.55 mi) G E Main Street Path (0.5 mi) B 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
B	\$3,166,075	F	\$177,309
C	\$301,259	G	\$352,450
D	\$445,000	H	\$4,910,443
Total			\$10,580,104

See full cost estimate in the Appendix for assumptions

JACKSON STREET PATH

Segment A

Several alternative routes were considered to connect the Scales Road Trail to the Brushy Creek Greenway through Old Town. There are several locations in this area with steep hills and other environmental challenges like a creek and wetlands. The proposed route avoids these issues by using the relatively flat route along Scales Road and Jackson Street, adding a new 12-foot wide path through the Old Suwanee neighborhood. In constrained sections, the path may

be reduced to 8 feet wide. Right-of-way acquisition will be needed in some locations.



FIGURE 22. PROPOSED JACKSON STREET PATH ROUTE



Alternative Route: Scales Road

As an alternative or interim solution, the connection between the Scales Road Trail and Main Street can be made via Scales Road, which already has sidewalks along most of the street. Missing sidewalk gaps, crosswalks, select curb ramp improvements, and signage could be added to improve the experience along this road for pedestrians. Because Scales Road is steep between Suwanee United Methodist Church and Main Street, sharrows and signage would be added from Scales Road to Jackson Street to direct cyclists to the slightly longer but flatter route along these low-volume neighborhood streets.

Eliminated Alternative: Off-street Connection

Connecting the Scales Road Trail to the Brushy Creek Greenway was identified by the community as an idea to explore in this process. A connection between Scales Road and Eva Kennedy Road was explored and presented to the community. The diagram at right shows a design concept for the route the community preferred. It required an easement through a wooded area to make the connection. Due to steep slopes, it would require several tight turns, retaining walls, and a boardwalk over Brushy Creek, making the construction cost prohibitive. As a result, this alternative was determined to be unfeasible.



PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE BRIDGE AND OFF-STREET PATH

Segment B

One of the community's top requests over the years has been to provide a safer crossing of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to better connect the neighborhoods north of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to Town Center. Several alternatives for a pedestrian and bicycle bridge were examined. A preferred location for a bridge near Silver Peak Parkway was identified that:

- Takes advantage of higher topography on the north side to create a bridge without stairs
- Mostly fits within existing right-of-way
- Is accessible from Silver Peak Parkway without impacting driveway access to adjacent properties
- Ties into Gwinnett County Department of Transportation's planned multi-use path, which will be constructed on the north side of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard
- Is central to multiple neighborhoods along the corridor

On the south side of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, the bridge will ramp down into a multi-use path on the north side of Silver Peak Parkway, which will continue through a utility corridor and connect to a multi-use path on Eva Kennedy Road. As conceptually illustrated, there was consensus among the advisory committee that the bridge should incorporate the branding of the loop and have artistic elements that contribute to Suwanee's identity.

FIGURE 23. PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE BRIDGE AND OFF-STREET PATH ROUTE





Proposed

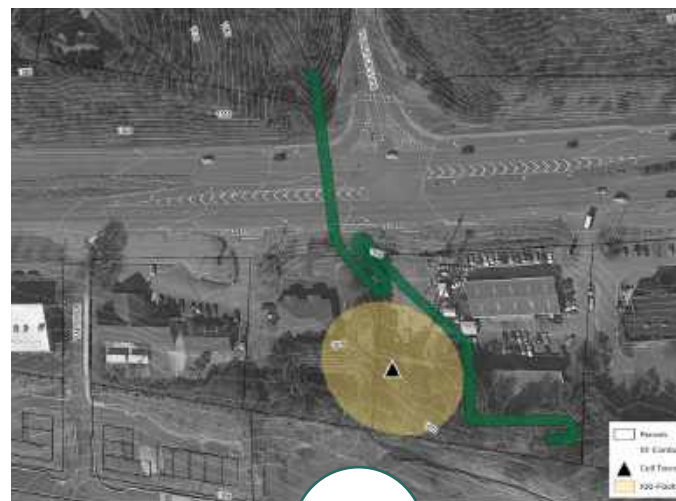
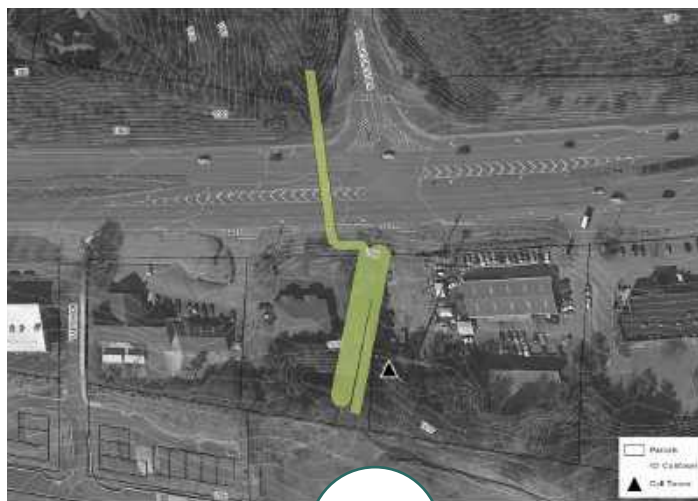
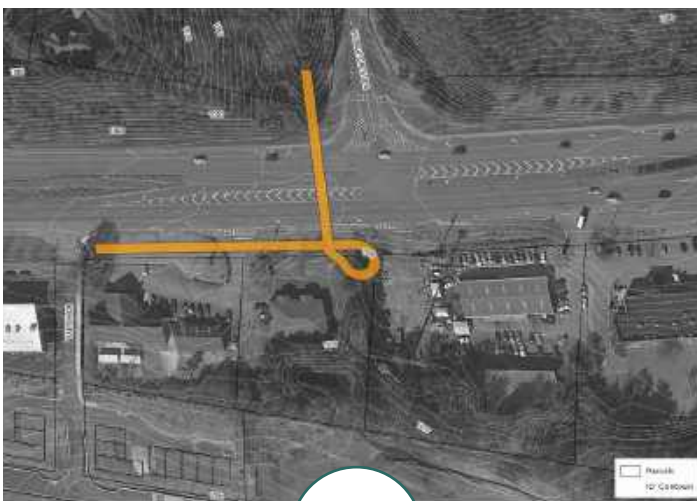
Rendering of pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

FIGURE 24. PREFERRED BRIDGE LOCATION



Alternative Bridge Routes Considered

Before selecting the recommended bridge route, several alternatives were considered, illustrated below.



EVA KENNEDY ROAD AND STONECYPHER ROAD PATHS

Segments B and F

Parts of Eva Kennedy Road and Stonecypher Road will be upgraded to become the main neighborhood connector for residents in the northwest part of Suwanee to access the loop. A 12-foot multi-use path to serve both pedestrians and cyclists, with some 8-foot wide segments in constrained locations, will connect the path leading to the pedestrian and bicycle bridge to the Brushy Creek Greenway along Eva Kennedy Road. The path will continue south onto Stonecypher Road between Eva Kennedy Road and Main Street to connect to the new multi-use path on Main Street.

Integrating Green Infrastructure

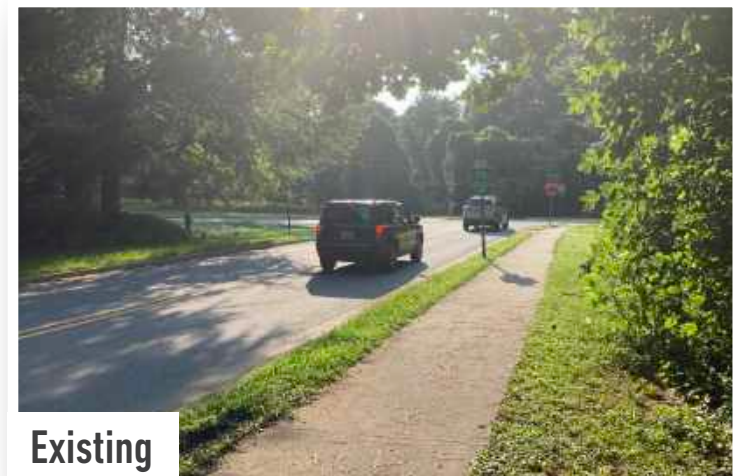
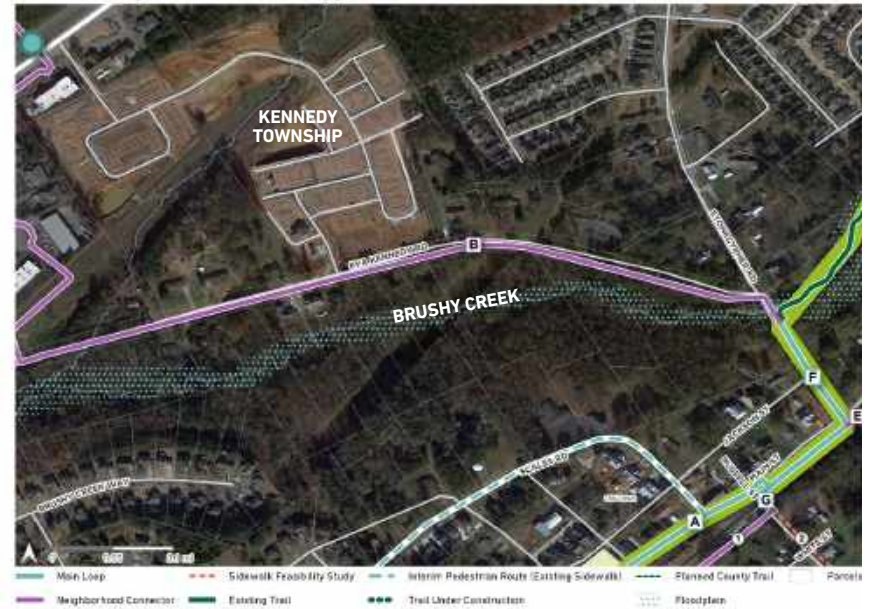
With Brushy Creek running parallel to Eva Kennedy Road, this site is a great

opportunity to incorporate green infrastructure as part of the landscape design. These features can help capture stormwater runoff and treat it on site, mitigating some of its effects to the surrounding area.



Stormwater garden

FIGURE 25. PROPOSED EVA KENNEDY ROAD AND STONECYPHER ROAD PATH ROUTES





Proposed

Rendering of multi-use path on Eva Kennedy Road

MAIN STREET PATH AND RAILROAD CROSSING

Segments G and E

The existing sidewalk on the southeast side of Main Street runs parallel to the railroad, separated from the rail by a wide grass buffer and in some places a hill. As part of the proposed loop route, this sidewalk would be replaced with a 10-foot-wide multi-use path to provide a continuous path that can serve both pedestrians and cyclists.

A 10-foot-wide multi-use path would also be added parallel to the railroad on the southeast side of the railroad between Russell Street and Main Street N.W. (Project 1), offering a safe alternative for pedestrians and cyclists to avoid the narrow section of White Street between Russell Street and Davis Street. For more information on this type of trail, see the Rails-with-Trails description on page 74.

Connecting to Businesses and Community Destinations

Businesses in Old Town Suwanee



Bringing the loop along Main Street ties Old Town Suwanee directly into the route, making trail-oriented shops and restaurants a part of the loop experience. With limited available parking in this area, this enhanced connection will make it easier for people to walk or bike to support these neighborhood businesses. It also integrates community destinations like the library, Main Street Park, Playtown Suwanee, and the new Town Center on Main park.

FIGURE 26. PROPOSED MAIN STREET PATH AND RAILROAD CROSSING ROUTE





Proposed

Rendering of multi-use path on Main Street and enhanced rail crossing at Russell Street

Improving the Railroad Crossing at Russell Street

An improved rail crossing at Russell Street and Main Street (project G) was a top requested improvement by the community. While there are currently no sidewalks crossing the tracks, many residents that provided input in the study said they regularly cross the tracks on foot at Russell Street or other spots along Main Street. While this is a desirable location for trail connectivity, it is complicated by the need to coordinate with Norfolk Southern, the operating railroad that controls the crossing and the land next to the tracks. Understanding the legal and design related challenges when working with major railroads, such as Norfolk Southern, to cross an active rail line or to place a trail facility along a corridor will be key to navigating a successful approach to this section of the Loop.

Two alternative concepts were developed for the rail crossing. The preferred option has a shared use path on the south side and a sidewalk on the north side, with new railroad gates added for pedestrians and cyclists. An alternative concept pulls the trail crossing south of the railroad crossing and merges the trail and sidewalk together to cross the rail.

Challenges

The following list represents the key issues related to rail/trail crossings and rail-with-trail development. For this project, the city will need to address development and risk management strategies as well as their approach to managing operations to safely accommodate trail use once in operation.

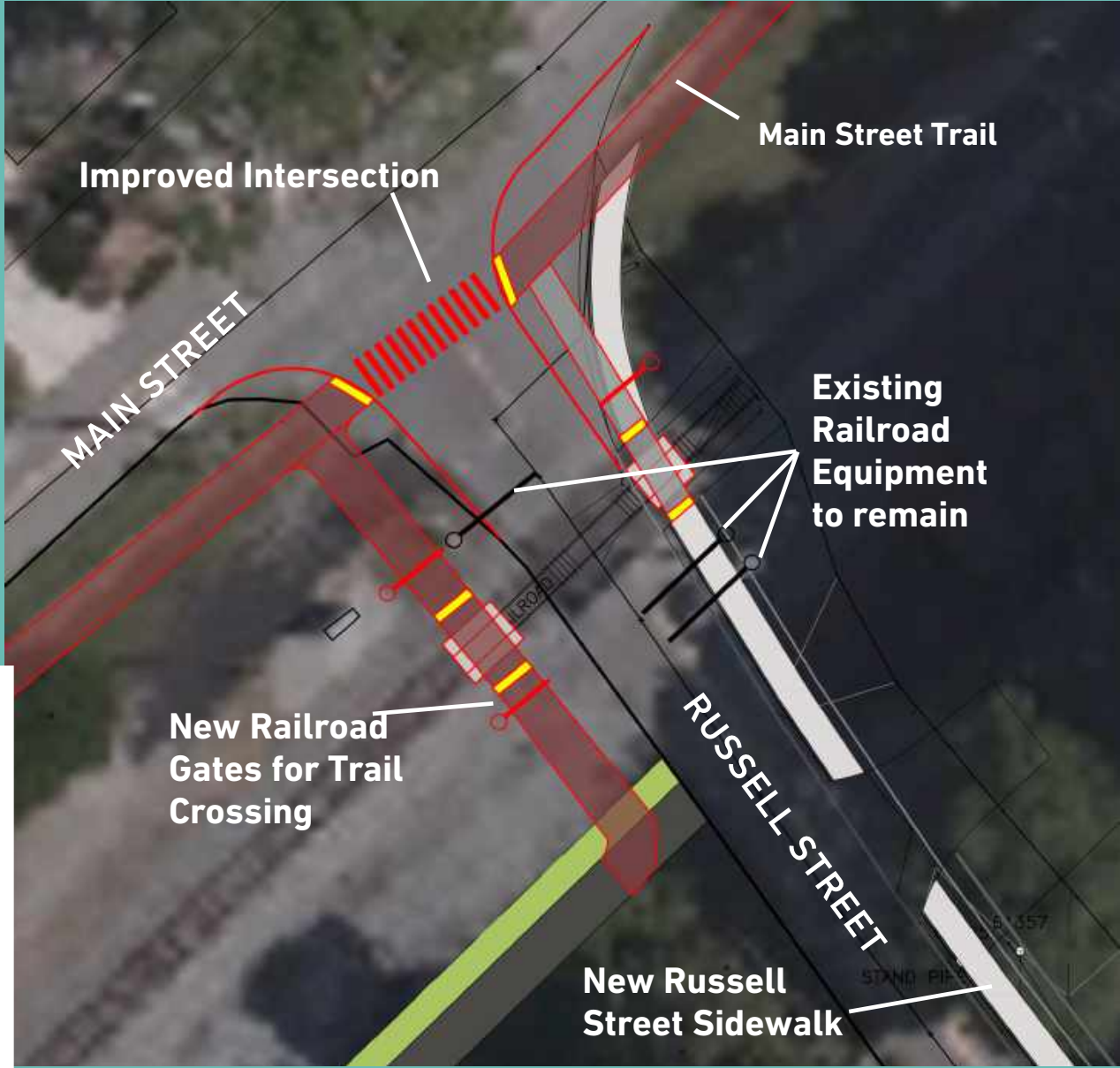
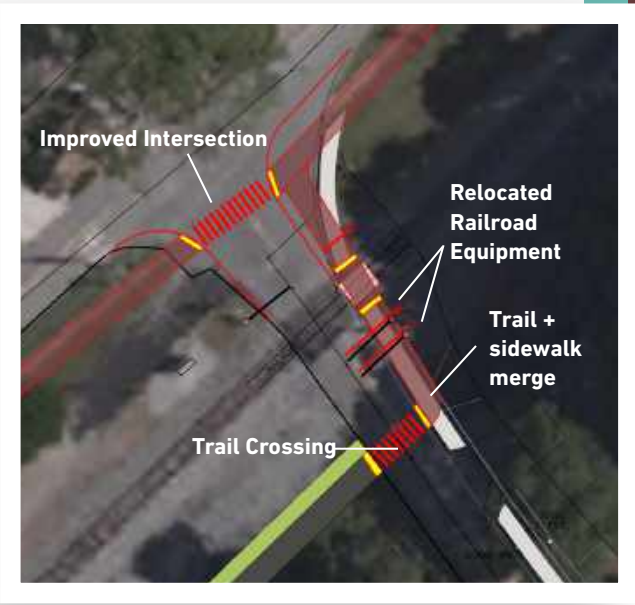
- Location and land ownership
- Railroad operations and attitude toward trail development near active lines
- Safe design - best practices in designing for safety including setback, separation, and crossings.
- Risk management strategies including designing for safety, prominent signage, regular inspection/remedial changes, and procedures for medical emergencies.
- Development strategies for the design and construction process due to environmental regulations, constrained space, and crossings.
- Management and maintenance approach.

Preferred Railroad Crossing at Russell Street

Design Considerations

- Signage — advanced notice of crossing
- Sight Distance
- Crossing surface
- Lighting
- Traffic control device
- Additional crossing arm and detectable warning surfaces
- Overhead and underground utilities

Alternate Concept



Rails-with-Trails

A rail-with-trail is a shared-use path or trail for public use located on or directly adjacent to an active railroad or rail transit corridor like the alignment along Main Street. A report conducted in 2020 by the USDOT/FHWA and the Volpe Institute, identified 343 open rails-with-trails in 47 states comprising 917-miles. Even with this on-the-ground success, these projects are often challenging given their unique acquisition, development, and management issues.

- Rails-with-trails exist in a wide range of circumstances — trails alongside rural short line excursion railroads — trails within the right-of-way of class I freight rail — and transportation trails next to inner city transit. Open communications with the operating railroad is essential throughout the project. Main Street has the advantage of an existing narrow path along the active corridor. This existing condition should provide an opportunity for improving the path to current national standards.
- While previous studies like USDOT's *Rails-with-Trails: Lessons Learned (2020)*, establish a strong safety record for these types of facilities, it is critical that this project be viewed in its unique context, as the legal and design issues vary depending on the jurisdiction and contractual arrangements of each situation.
- As with any well designed trail project it is recommended that the city start with the highest standards as represented in the AASHTO, MUTCD and *Rails-with-Trails: Lessons Learned* publications. Invariably, there will be a series of constraints and enhancements that will need to be accommodated to meet the specific needs of the city and the railroad operator. The goal is to strike a balance between developing a world-class loop trail with the operation, safety, and security concerns of the railroad and the City of Suwanee.

Resources

- [FHWA Report: Rails-with-Trails Best Practices and Lessons Learned \(2021\)](#)
- [Rails-with-Trails: Best Practices and Lessons Learned, United States Department of Transportation \(2020\)](#)
- [America's Rails-with-Trails Report, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy \(2014\)](#)

“ There are approximately 1,000 miles of rails-with-trails across the U.S. ”

Cedar Lake Trail in Minneapolis



Trail railroad crossing in Seattle



Trail at Santa Fe Railyard Park



Charlotte Rail Trail (Source: Land Design)

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE: WETLAND CROSSING

Segments D and H

Community members expressed a desire to keep the loop in natural and neighborhood settings as much as possible, with minimal time spent on paths next to major roads. The primary loop route uses an existing sidepath next to McGinnis Ferry Road between the Suwanee Creek Greenway and the

Scales Road Trail. As an alternative to this segment along a major road, the Wetland Crossing route may be pursued (Segment H). This option provides a more continuously natural experience, tying together the Suwanee Creek Greenway, nearby wetlands, and White Street Park. A tunnel would be constructed under Buford Highway to avoid an at-grade crossing of this major road. Unlike the McGinnis Ferry Road route, this alternative would require significant property acquisition or easements on private property to be constructed. It would also require the construction of boardwalks and bridges due

to the topography and tendency for this area to flood, which would increase the cost of construction.



Pedestrian Bridge Over Suwanee Creek



Overlooks & Interpretive Features

Opportunities

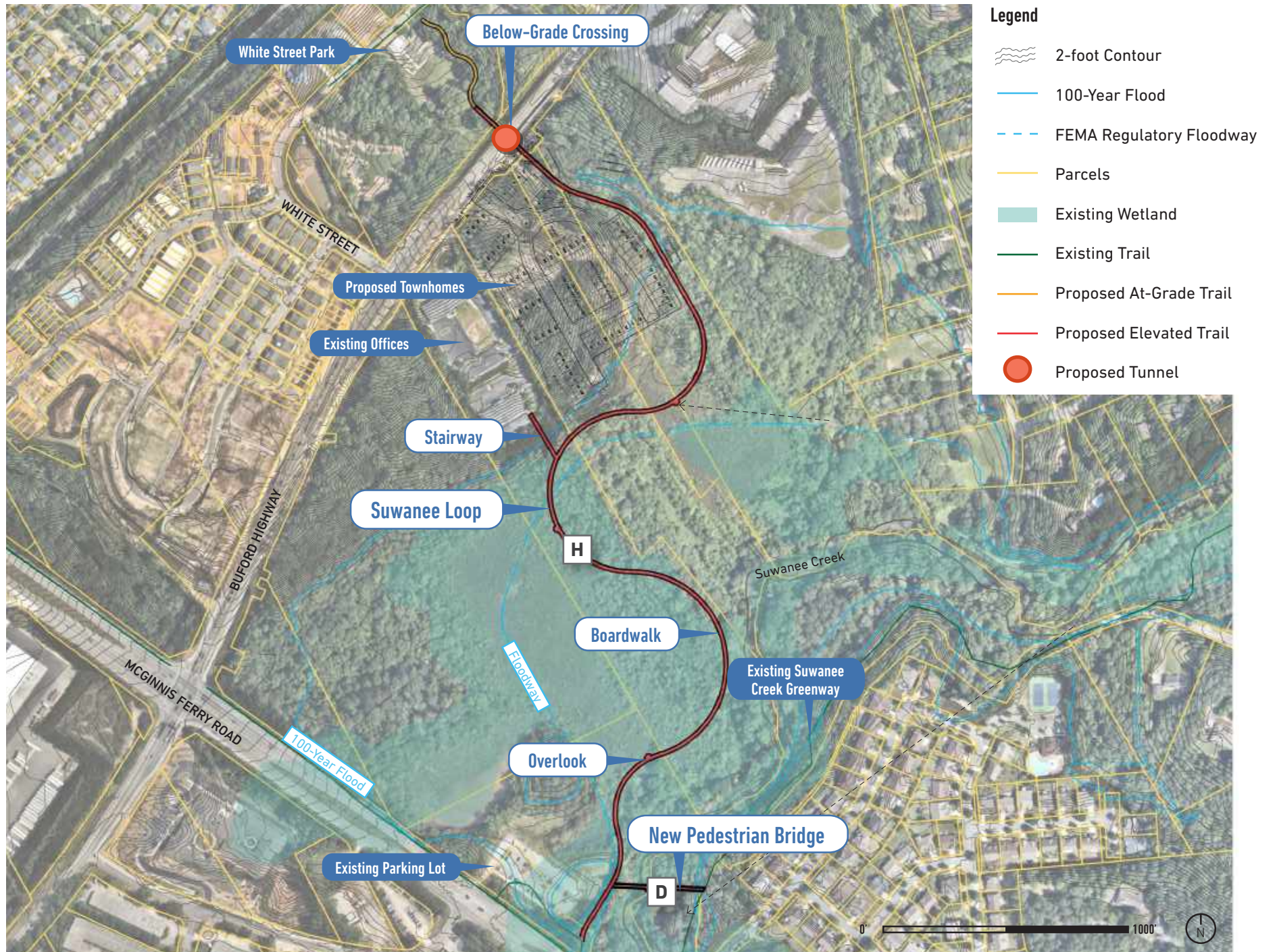
- Provides connection between Suwanee Creek Greenway and west side of Old Town without crossing Buford Highway while bypassing McGinnis Ferry Road arterial.
- Provides trail access for existing offices and new neighborhoods.
- Trail segment passes through forested area and over natural streams and existing wetlands
- Minimizes grading and vegetation disturbance in the Suwanee Creek riparian zone and wetlands

Challenges

- Below-grade crossing required at Buford Highway
- Trail construction will disturb existing hillside, vegetation, and mature trees upstream of existing wetlands and Suwanee Creek

A new pedestrian and bicycle bridge (Segment D) could be constructed—even if Segment H is not—so Suwanee Creek Greenway users can avoid going up onto McGinnis Ferry Road to get to the access point for the southern portion of the Suwanee Creek Greenway. This would maintain a continuous natural experience from George Pierce Park to Suwanee Creek Park and improve direct access to existing trailhead parking.

FIGURE 27. PROPOSED WETLAND CROSSING ROUTE



TOWN CENTER ON MAIN PATH

Segment I

The loop will be completed by a path that will wind through Town Center on Main, a planned expansion of Town Center Park. The concept for this section will be developed as part of the new park design. Amenities throughout the park will give loop users opportunities to wander, rest, and play along the way.

This portion of the loop will connect the Brushy Creek Greenway to the existing pedestrian and bicycle tunnel beneath the railroad that connects to Town Center Park. The multi-use path on Main Street will intersect the loop at the tunnel.

FIGURE 28. TOWN CENTER ON MAIN MASTER PLAN



Source: Town Center on Main Master Plan



suwannee

6

BRANDING

BRANDING

The City of Suwanee is known for its playful personality, artistic touches, and caring community. To create a loop experience as distinctive as the city, a unique brand will make it a memorable place with local flare and regional appeal.

The project team worked with the Advisory Committee, city staff, and the community to develop a brand direction for the loop with a consistent style that complements the existing city brand. This section is a brand guide starter pack, outlining key elements and alternative logo concepts, which can be refined and built upon by city staff after this study.

WHAT IS A BRAND?

A person's **gut feeling** about a product, service, or organization.

(More than a logo, an identity, or a product)

BUILDING ON THE SUWANEЕ BRAND

Suwanee's overall city brand is bubbly, colorful, and instantly recognizable. The loop branding will build on this established community identity by incorporating key motifs and colors to feel like part of the Suwanee family.

Bubbles with movement



Lighthearted & welcoming



Whimsical & cheeky applications



Colorful & Artistic



Embraced by the community



WHAT WE HEARD

As community members and staff reviewed several draft mood boards and talked about which aspects of Suwanee should be highlighted through the brand, the following themes emerged to guide what the brand should and should not feature:



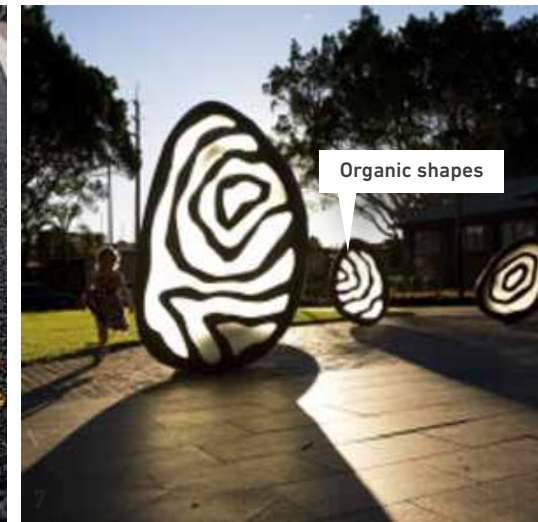
- Simple, clean, and modern
- Vibrant colors, drawing on the citywide branding palette
- Happy
- Touches of playful personality
- Easy on the eyes and legible from a distance
- Core sentiments
 - Caring, diverse community
 - Energizing, active, and healthy
 - Progressive
 - Green and natural living... but not too far



- Serif fonts
- Traditional or feeling stuck in the past
- Overly playful or cutesy
- Overwhelming or illegible styles

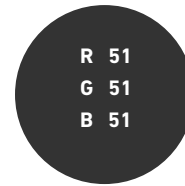
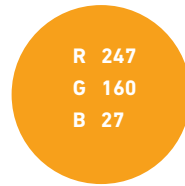
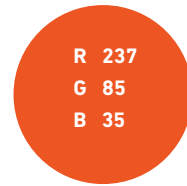
MOOD BOARD

These images inspired the look and feel of the Suwanee Loop brand, including graphic design and integrated landscape design features.



COLOR PALETTE

The loop will feature a subset of the city's broader color palette, pairing vibrant orange and yellow with softer green and aqua hues and grounding neutrals to reflect how the loop will weave together Suwanee's bold personality with more relaxed, natural settings.



LOGO OPTIONS

Four logo options were developed to fit with the brand direction. Staff will continue to evaluate the alternatives and select the preferred logo(s) to anchor the loop brand.

1



2



This logo got the most votes at the Community Open House

3



4





7 PLACEMAKING

PLACEMAKING

Great trails are more than infrastructure, they are places and experiences that bring communities together. To make the loop experience special, the route connects to many of Suwanee's favorite places, including seven parks, community facilities, and local shops and restaurants. The city identified opportunities for placemaking features that will integrate art, interaction, community identity, and natural beauty along the trail itself. Some of these elements could be incorporated

into the permanent design as trail segments are constructed or upgraded. Others could be developed collaboratively with the community over time, installed temporarily to add variety to the trail experience, or activated with programming. The following pages explore how placemaking strategies can embrace unique local qualities, draw people to the trail, and keep them talking about it long after they've loaded their bikes or kicked off their shoes.



Placemaking elements like art installations, local businesses, and well loved neighborhood parks help make Suwanee a distinctive community.



WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

Placemaking strengthens connections between people and our shared spaces. It draws on local inspiration for design, creates opportunities for activity and interaction, and showcases the community identity and values. Quirks and creativity are welcome. At its best, placemaking is a collaborative, ongoing community effort to create special moments that make a place shine.

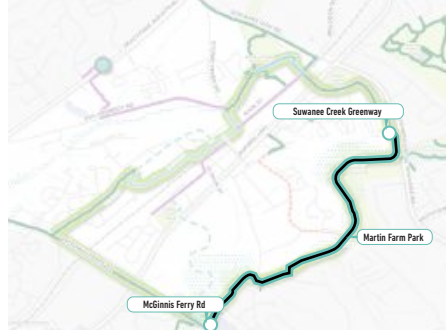
ONE TRAIL, FOUR CHARACTER AREAS

The four trail character areas reflect the unique qualities of their surrounding neighborhoods and natural areas, creating a dynamic range of experiences tied together with common visual elements, integrated project branding, and a playful Suwanee spirit.



THE PROMENADE

Active, Friendly, Refined



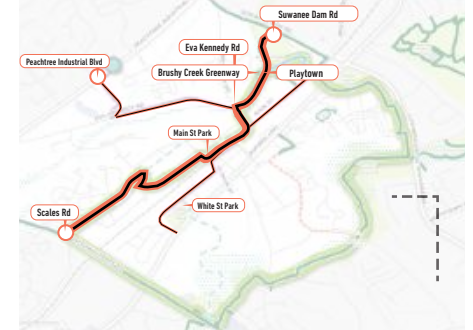
THE MEANDER

Naturalistic, Serene, Diverse



THE BOULEVARD

Energetic, Vibrant, Welcoming

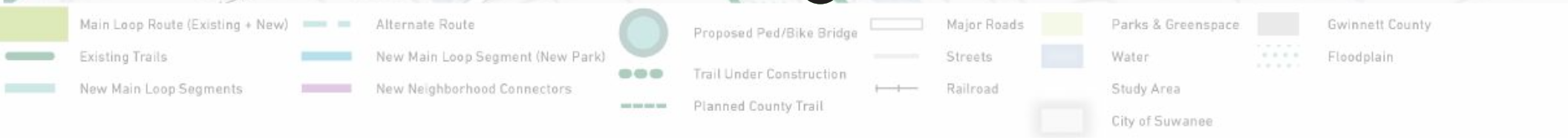
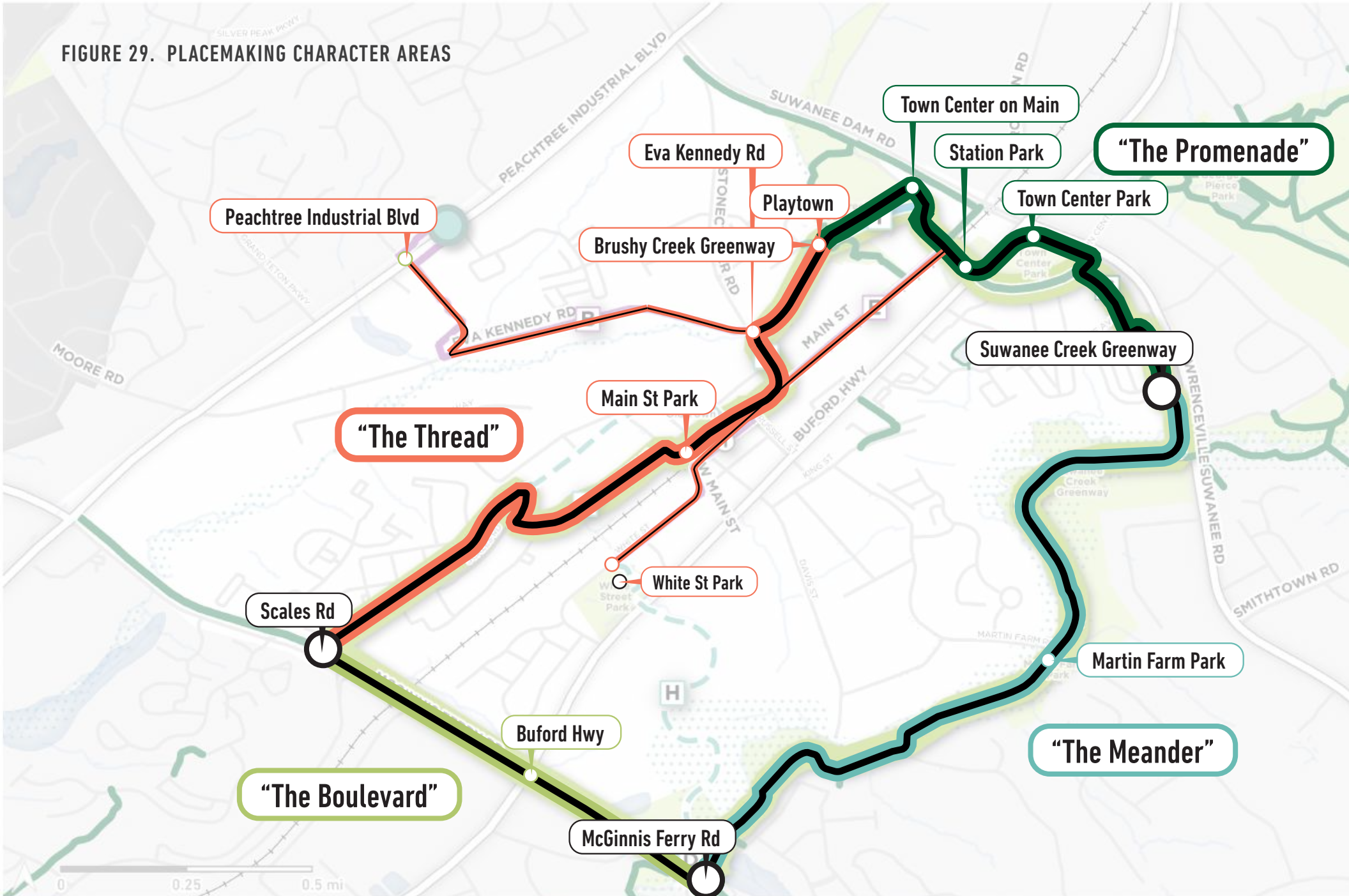


THE THREAD

Eclectic, Neighborly, Approachable



FIGURE 29. PLACEMAKING CHARACTER AREAS



THE PROMENADE



The Promenade

Active, Friendly, Refined.

Existing Conditions and Community Connections

The Promenade connects Suwanee's signature parks and premier destinations. It begins at the Brushy Creek Greenway and travels southeast through Town Center until it intersects with the Suwanee Creek Greenway. Users enjoying this section of the greenway will pass through some of Suwanee's most iconic public spaces including Town Center Park, Station Park, and the future Town Center on Main, as well as all the dining and retail that Town Center has to offer.

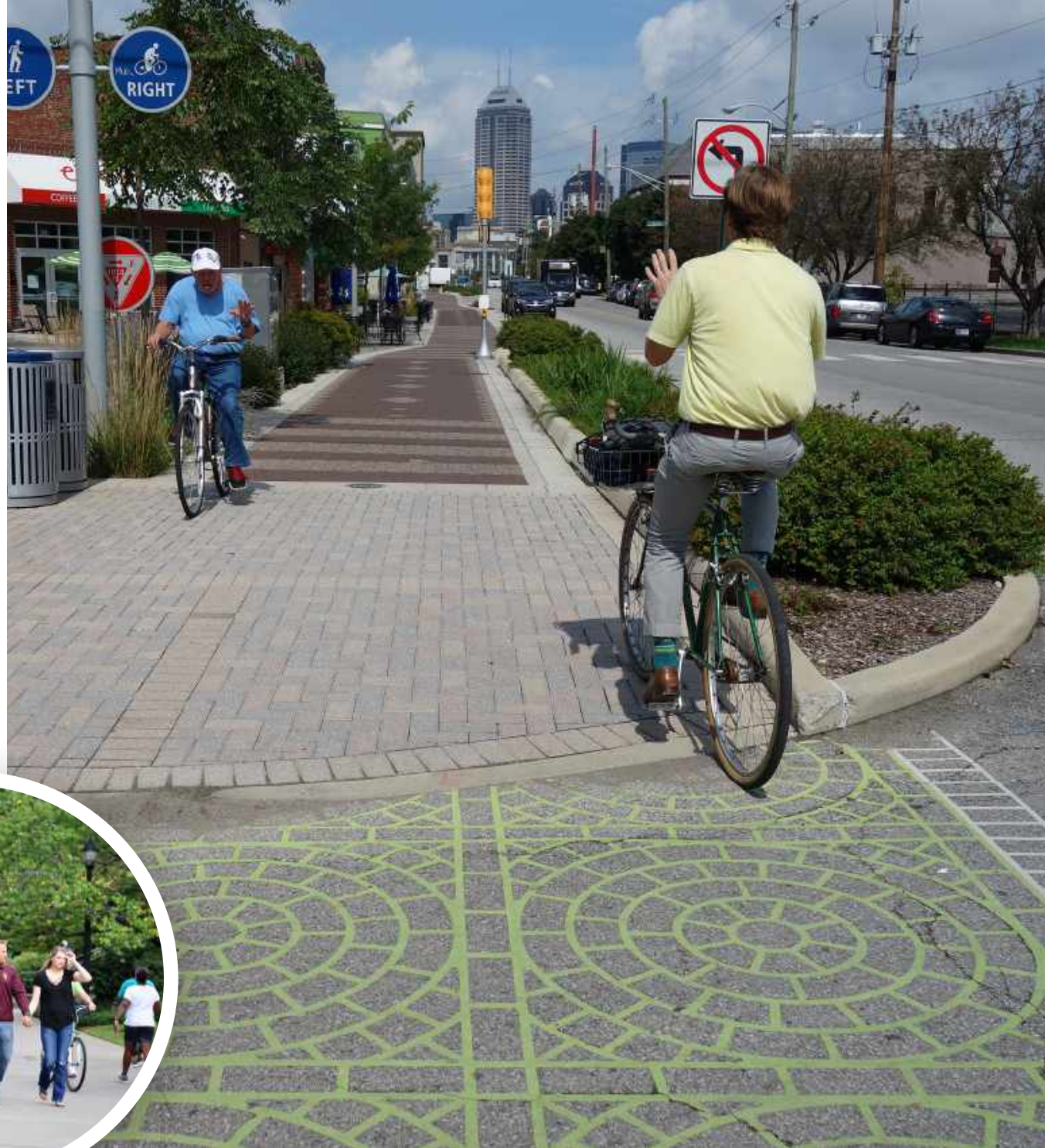
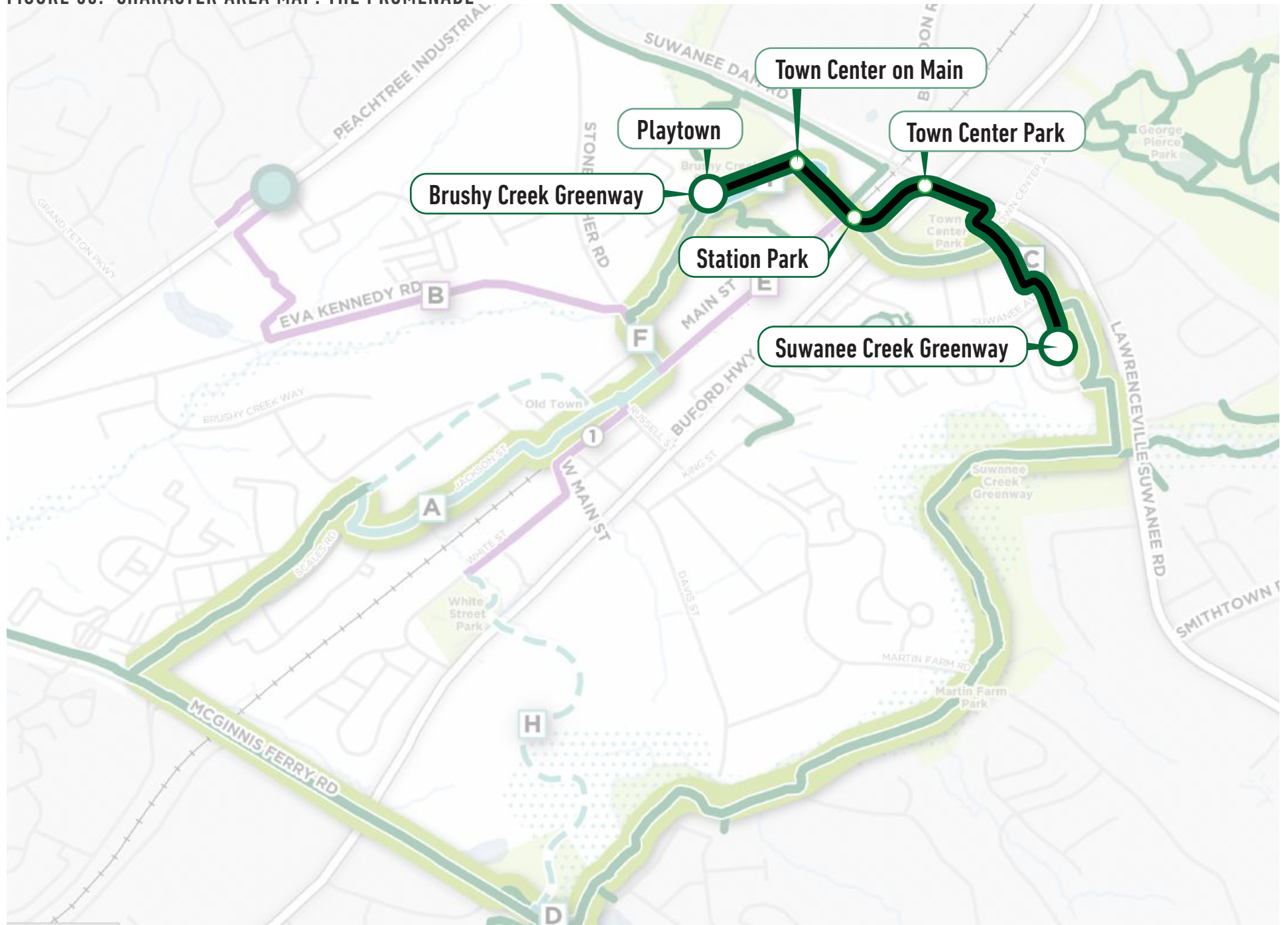


FIGURE 30. CHARACTER AREA MAP: THE PROMENADE



Pedestrian-scaled Streetscape Elements



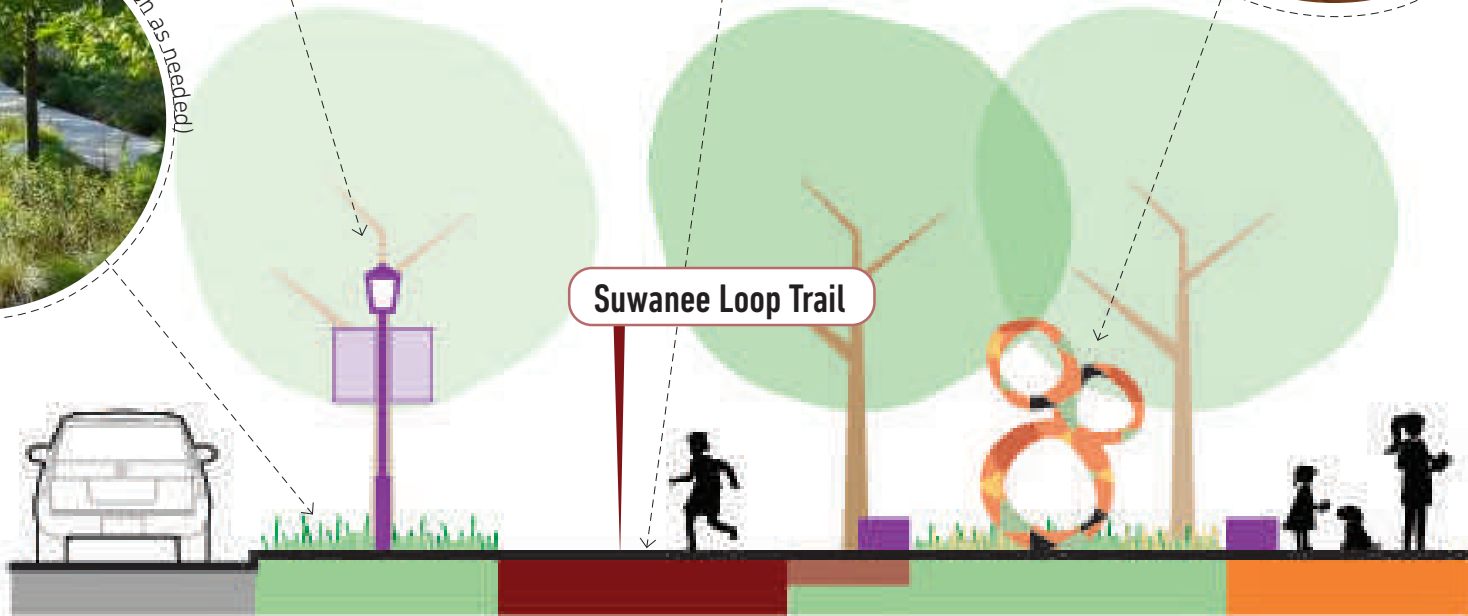
Highly-Refined Urban Trail Experience



Art & Sculpture Installations



Native-inspired Plant Palette (with bioretention as needed)



THE PROMENADE | TYPICAL SECTION



Precedent

Case Study: The Indianapolis Cultural Trail (ICT) is an urban trail and linear park connecting arts, cultural and entertainment destinations with neighborhoods and greenways in the urban core of Indianapolis, Indiana. The ICT features a robust public art program and ecologically informed network of gardens which contribute to its health, value, and vibrancy.

Big and Small Moves

As the most active and visible section of trail in Suwanee, The Promenade features design interventions that contribute to its overall sense of being active, friendly, and refined. The trail provides a highly refined urban trail experience through generous distribution of pedestrian-scaled streetscape elements, native-inspired plantings, and diverse artistic installations. This upland section of trail should feature context-appropriate green infrastructural best practices to reduce the stress placed on lowland water ways, such as Brushy Creek and Suwanee Creek, and the city's aging stormwater system.



THE MEANDER





The Meander

Naturalistic, Serene, Diverse.

Existing Conditions and Community Connections

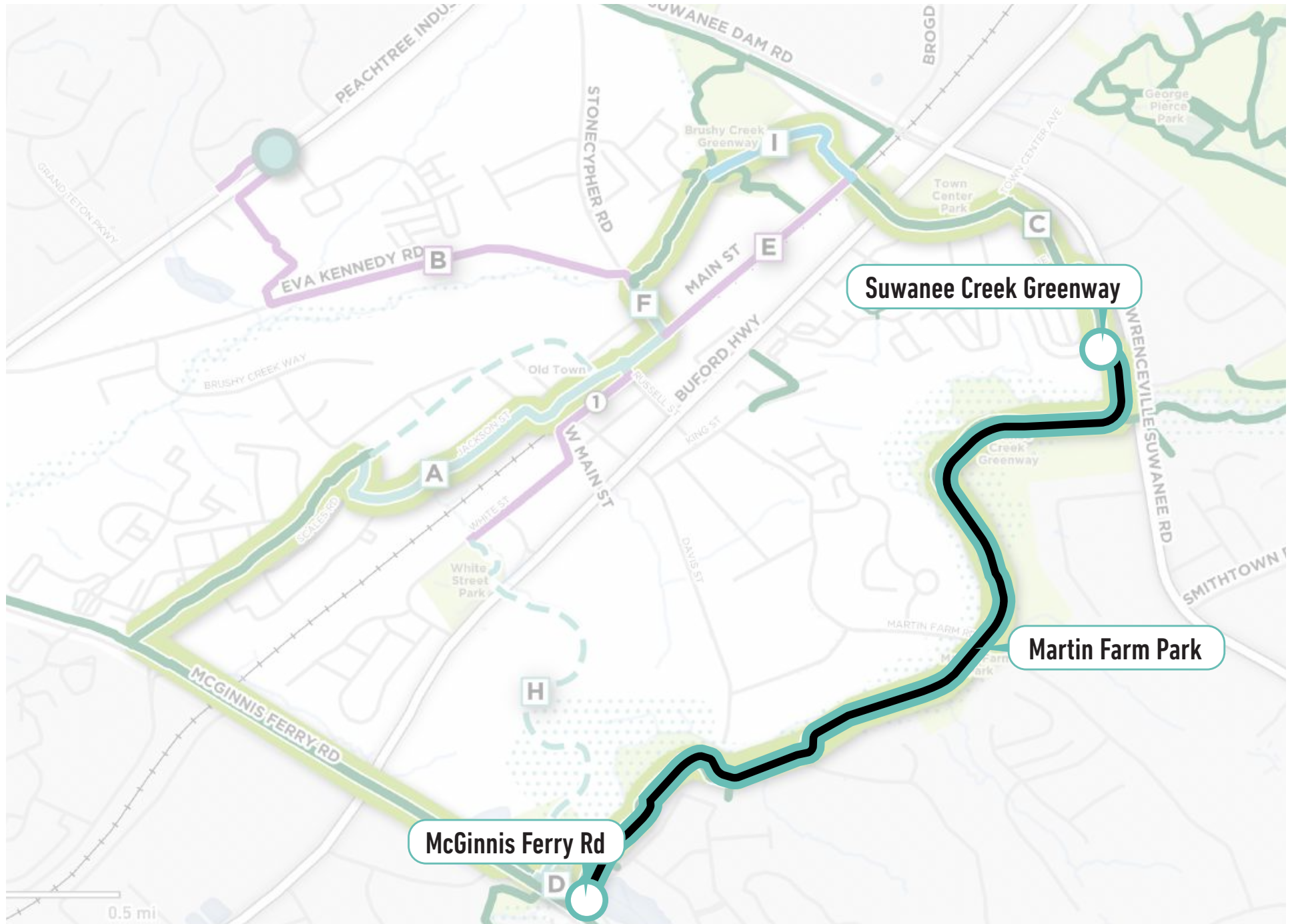
The Meander encompasses Suwanee's greatest natural resource and most beloved trail asset: Suwanee Creek and the Suwanee Creek Greenway (SCG). It begins at the SCG entry near Portland Trail Drive and follows the existing greenway to where it intersects McGinnis Ferry Road. Users visiting the Suwanee Creek Greenway can enjoy access to the shade and nature of the creek's riparian environment as well as the amenities at Martin Farm Park.

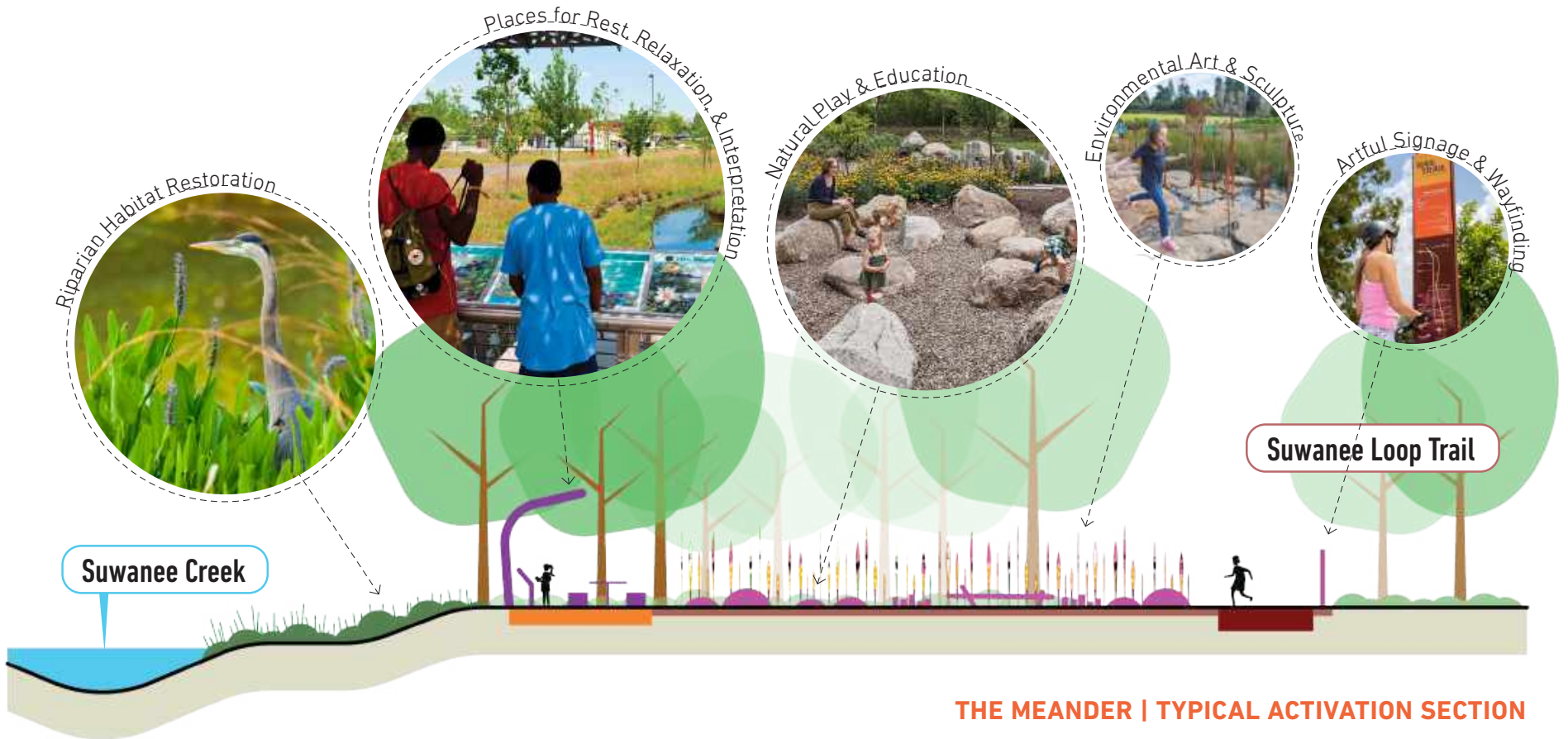
Precedent

Case Study: Rose Run Park transformed an inaccessible stream corridor in New Albany, Ohio into the physical, visual, and emotional heart of the community. The Park physically connects people to nature, each other, and community assets while preserving green space in the heart of New Albany.



FIGURE 31. CHARACTER AREA MAP: THE MEANDER





THE MEANDER | TYPICAL ACTIVATION SECTION

Big and Small Moves

The Meander features design interventions that improve the health of Suwanee Creek’s riparian corridor and diversify the ways trail users can interact with it and one another. Stream and floodplain restoration improve the function, stability, and habitat value of Suwanee Creek and serve as the foundation for new amenities that activate and enliven the greenway.

Spaces dedicated to rest, relaxation, and interpretation should be sensitively inserted into the fabric of the greenway and feature installations that highlight the unique nature and history of Suwanee Creek. Opportunities for play and

education provide more ways to experience the greenway and should feature creative use of natural elements. The creation of a network of secondary paths through the floodplain relieves pressure from the mainline trail and bring users closer to the nature of the Suwanee Creek.

While potential for the interventions mentioned above exists all along the greenway, particular emphasis should be placed on interventions that enhance the Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and McGinnis Ferry underpasses, and enliven Martin Farm Park.



THE BOULEVARD



The Boulevard

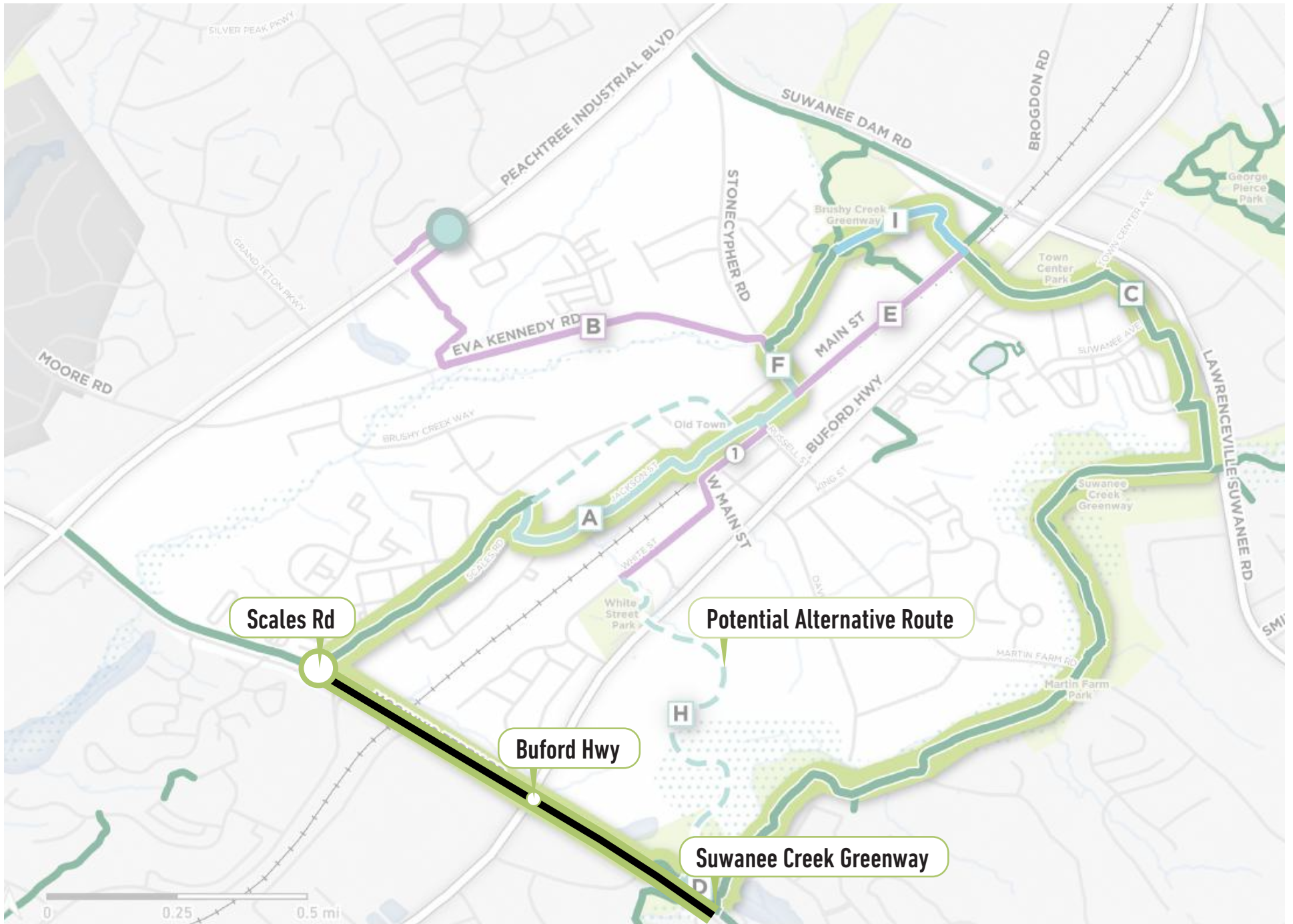
Energetic, Vibrant, Welcoming

Existing Conditions and Community Connections

The Boulevard travels along the east side of McGinnis Ferry Road from the Suwanee Creek Greenway to Scales Road. The high frequency and speed of vehicles traveling along McGinnis Ferry Road, along with the lack of shade, are the defining characteristics of this stretch of trail. However, prominent intersections along the route, including those at Buford Highway and the Suwanee Creek Greenway, present the opportunity for large scale interventions. Community feedback expressed that this segment is the least comfortable of the loop. This segment was included to close the loop due to a lack of an alternative. If an alternative avoiding arterials presents itself, the city should pursue that option. If McGinnis Ferry becomes part of the loop, it should be designed to make pedestrians more comfortable.



FIGURE 32. CHARACTER AREA MAP: THE BOULEVARD



Precedent

The imagery present explores opportunities for the physical composition and experiential qualities of the The Boulevard.

Big and Small Moves

The Boulevard proposes a new front door to the Suwanee Creek Greenway and larger trail system. Design interventions focus on improving the perceived safety of the trail through the creation of a landscape buffer featuring native-inspired ornamental grasses and shrubs. More experiential diversity is created along the trail by creatively inserting public art not only adjacent to the trail, but also by considering the surface of the trail itself as a canvas to intervene within. At prominent intersections, such as the bridge over the Suwanee Creek Greenway and the intersection with Buford Highway, monumental public art installations announce the trail network and serve as gateways welcoming passersby to this thriving part of the Suwanee community.

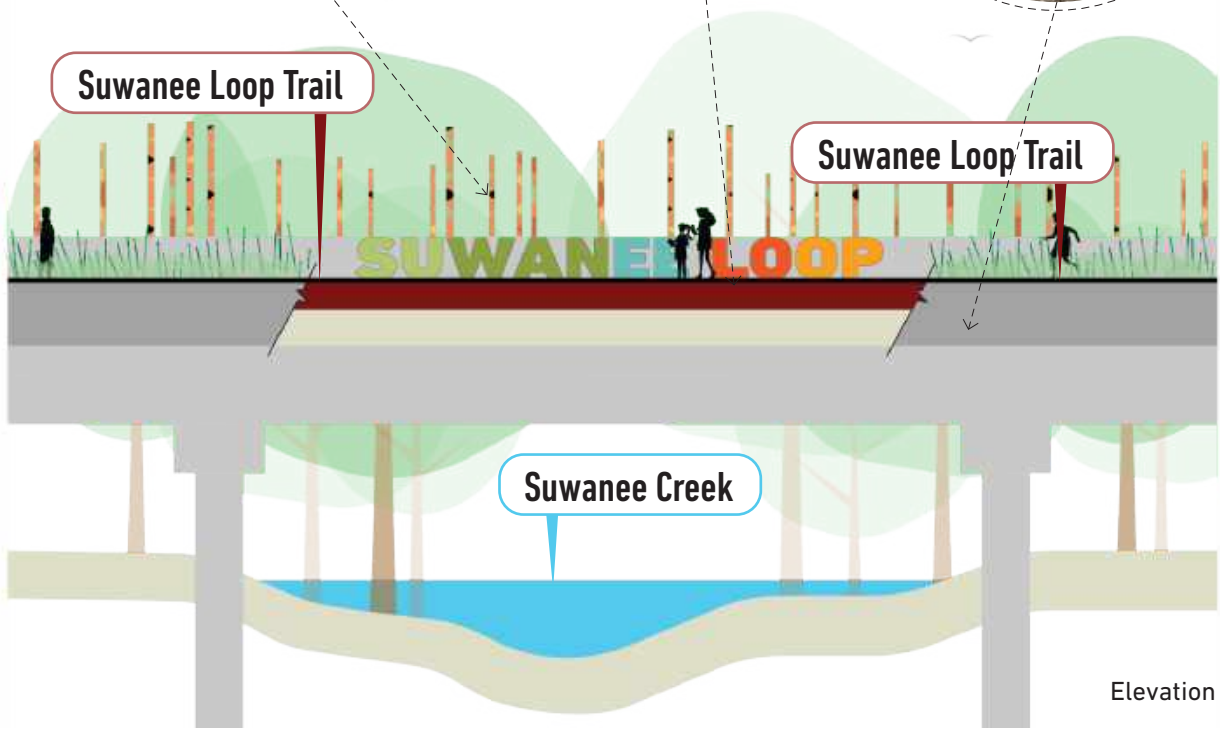
Environmental Art and Sculpture



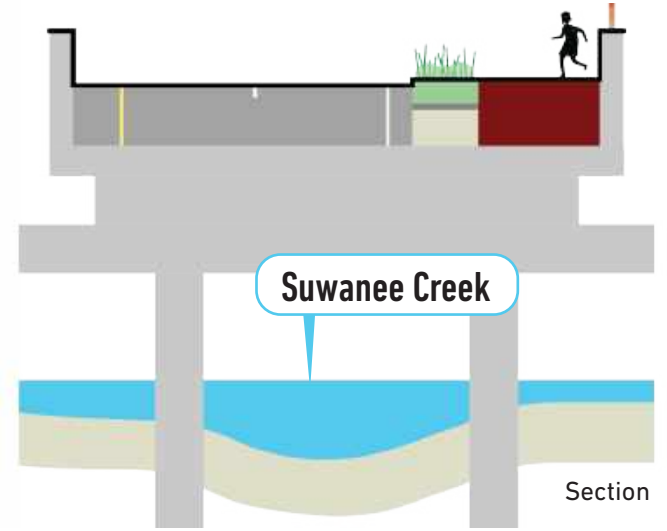
Art and Wayfinding on Concrete Elements



Native Grasses and Shrubs

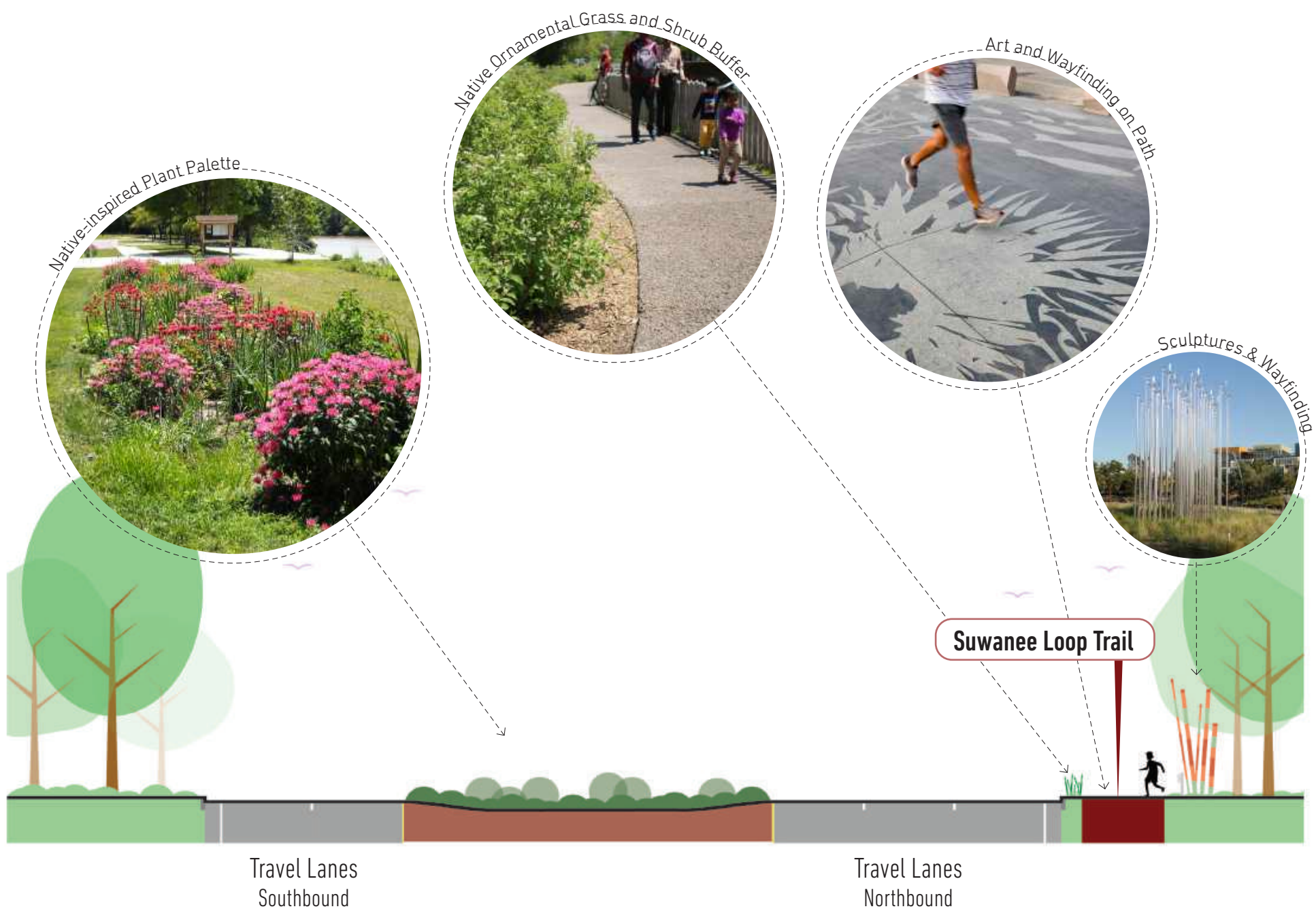


Elevation



Section

THE BOULEVARD | TYPICAL MCGINNIS FERRY BRIDGE ELEVATION AND SECTION



THE BOULEVARD | TYPICAL MCGINNIS FERRY RD SECTION

THE THREAD





The Thread

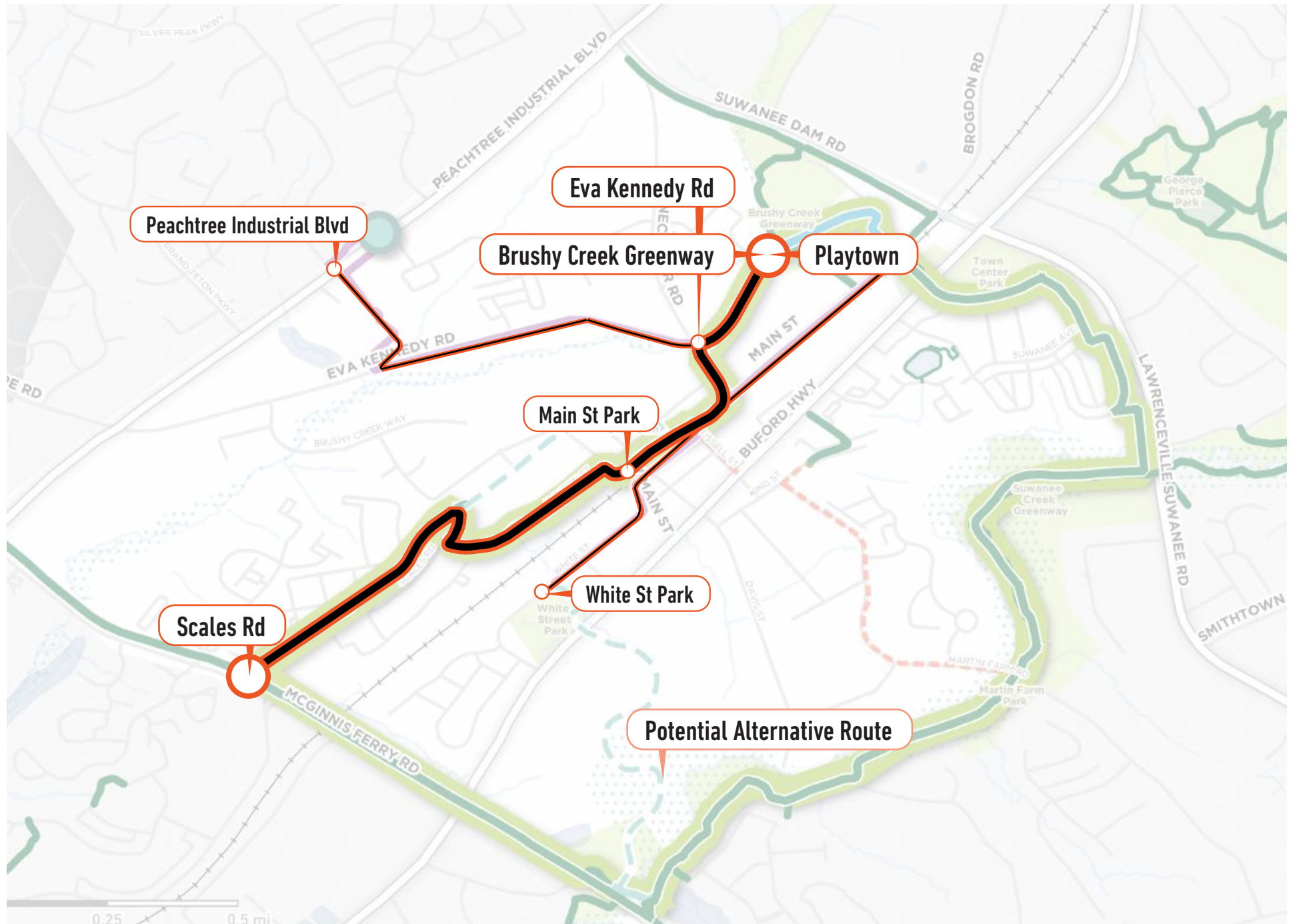
Eclectic, Neighborly, Approachable

Existing Conditions and Community Connections

The Thread weaves its way through Suwanee's historic district and emerging neighborhoods, eventually connecting with the Brushy Creek Greenway. This section of the loop begins at the intersection of Scales Road and terminates at the Brushy Creek Greenway. A series of spur trails extend out from the mainline and connect residents north of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard by way of Eva Kennedy Road and White Street Park to the Suwanee Loop trail. Users will witness firsthand the evolution of the Suwanee community as they travel through Old Town, which dates to the 1870's, to the contemporary communities emerging along White Street, as well as experience the nature of the Brushy Creek Greenway and the whimsy of Playtown Suwanee.



FIGURE 33. CHARACTER AREA MAP: THE THREAD



Precedent

Case Study: The Katy Trail is an urban trail and linear park in Dallas, Texas which connects nearly 20 neighborhoods along its 3.5-mile length. Extending from Southern Methodist University to the mixed-use district around the American Airlines Center (home to the NHL's Dallas Stars and the NBA's Dallas Mavericks). The project provides a vital active transportation link, recreational corridor, and passive naturalistic amenity for the Dallas community.

Big and Small Moves

Perhaps the most experientially diverse and spatially constrained section of the Loop, The Thread features a variety of design interventions that respond to the unique conditions along its length. Artful signage and wayfinding greet users as they enter the trail from surrounding neighborhoods. Places for rest, relaxation, and interpretation are found across the section and provide visitors with a variety of ways to inhabit the loop. Context-sensitive public art and sculpture tell stories of the community's past, present, and future. Native-inspired plantings and ecologically performative installations connect users to nature and provide green infrastructural benefits by creating habitat and capturing stormwater.



THE THREAD | TYPICAL SCALES ROAD SECTION

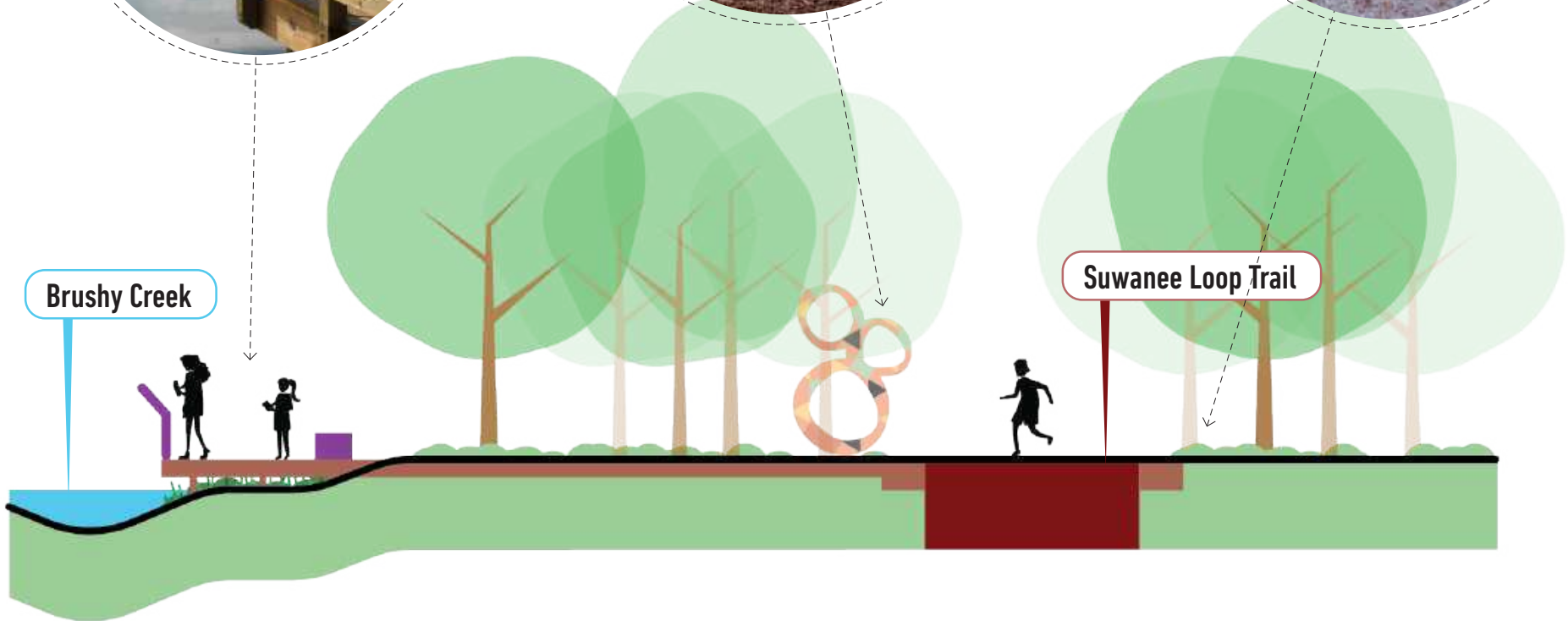
Overlooks & Interpretive Features



Context-sensitive Public Art & Sculpture



Riparian Forest Restoration & Management



THE THREAD | TYPICAL BRUSHY CREEK GREENWAY SECTION

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The following pages examine the relationship between the Suwanee Loop trail and the communities it connects. Here we will explore three types of intersections between the trail and adjacent neighborhoods: Gateways, Trailheads, and Connectors.



G Gateways

Gateways occur at major intersections of the trail system and major roadways. These prominent locations offer tremendous placemaking potential and should be highly amenitized and articulated. Potential elements include:

- Monumental Public Art
- Wayfinding Signage
- Seating
- Trash Receptacles
- Water Refill
- Bike Parking
- Bike Repair Kiosk
- Lighting



T Trailheads

Trailheads often occur where opportunities for vehicular parking exist along the route and are often associated with existing public amenities and civic institutions. Potential elements include:

- Restroom
- Wayfinding Signage
- Seating
- Trash Receptacles
- Water Refill
- Bike Parking
- Bike Repair Kiosk
- Lighting

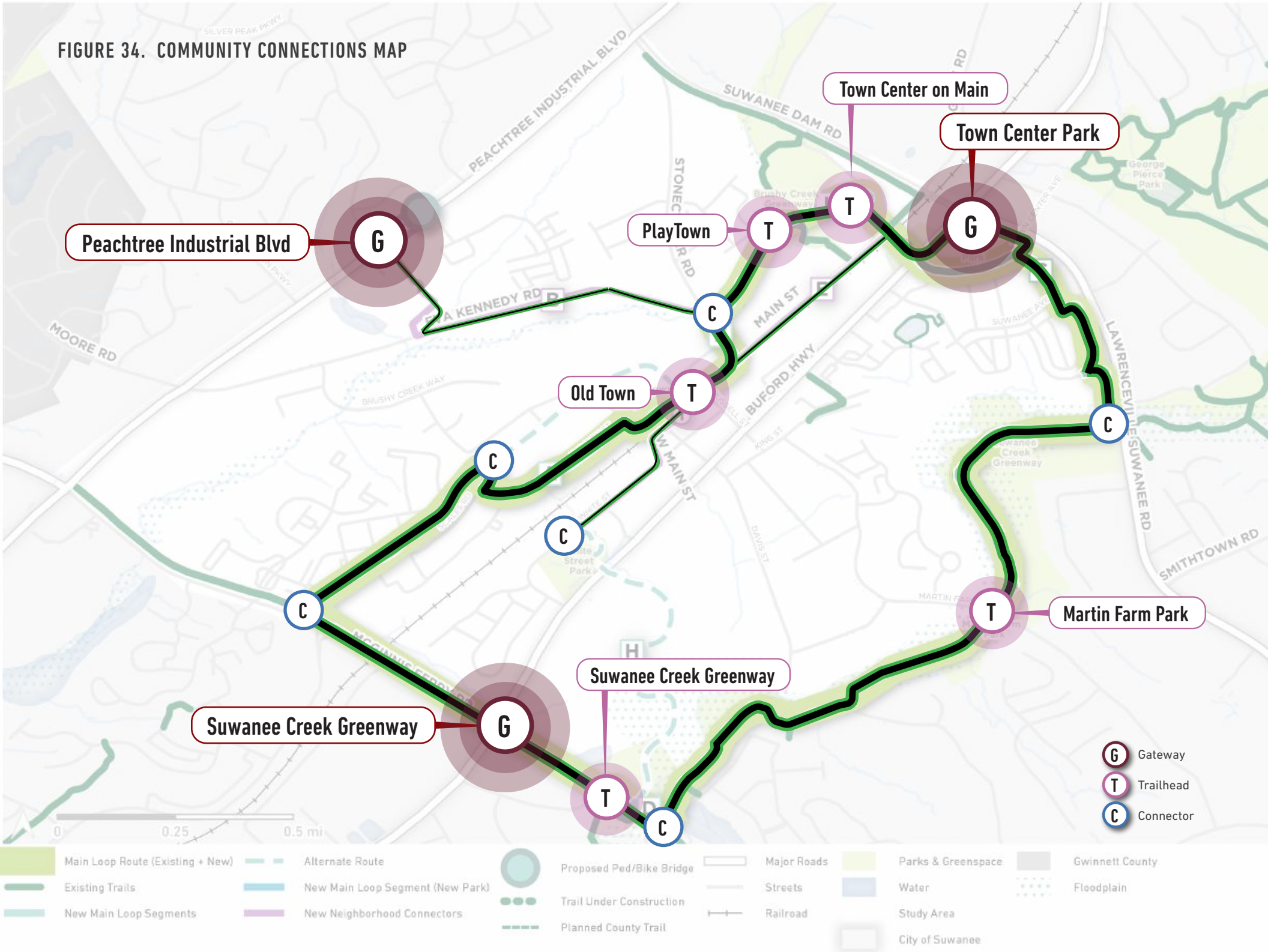


C Connector

Connectors occur where the route intersects existing roadways, trails, and public ways. These neighborhood connections improve accessibility and connectivity to the surrounding Suwanee community. Potential elements include:

- Wayfinding Signage
- Seating
- Trash Receptacles
- Lighting

FIGURE 34. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS MAP



THE PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

The Suwanee loop possesses tremendous opportunity to be conceived of as an ever-evolving cultural corridor, featuring pieces and performances by artists local, national, and beyond. Suwanee's Public Art Master Plan identifies three artistic directions that define the character and quality of public art within the community:



Suwanee's public art should celebrate play. Art + Play projects should:

- Be connective, involving people of all ages and abilities.
- Be in places that are easily accessible to pedestrians and close enough so that they can be experienced by walking from one to another.
- Be unique, visible, and display sufficient critical mass that as a group they will become a part of Suwanee's Identity.
- Be the kind of artworks that people will make a point of coming to see, talk about long after they leave and wonder about what will happen next.



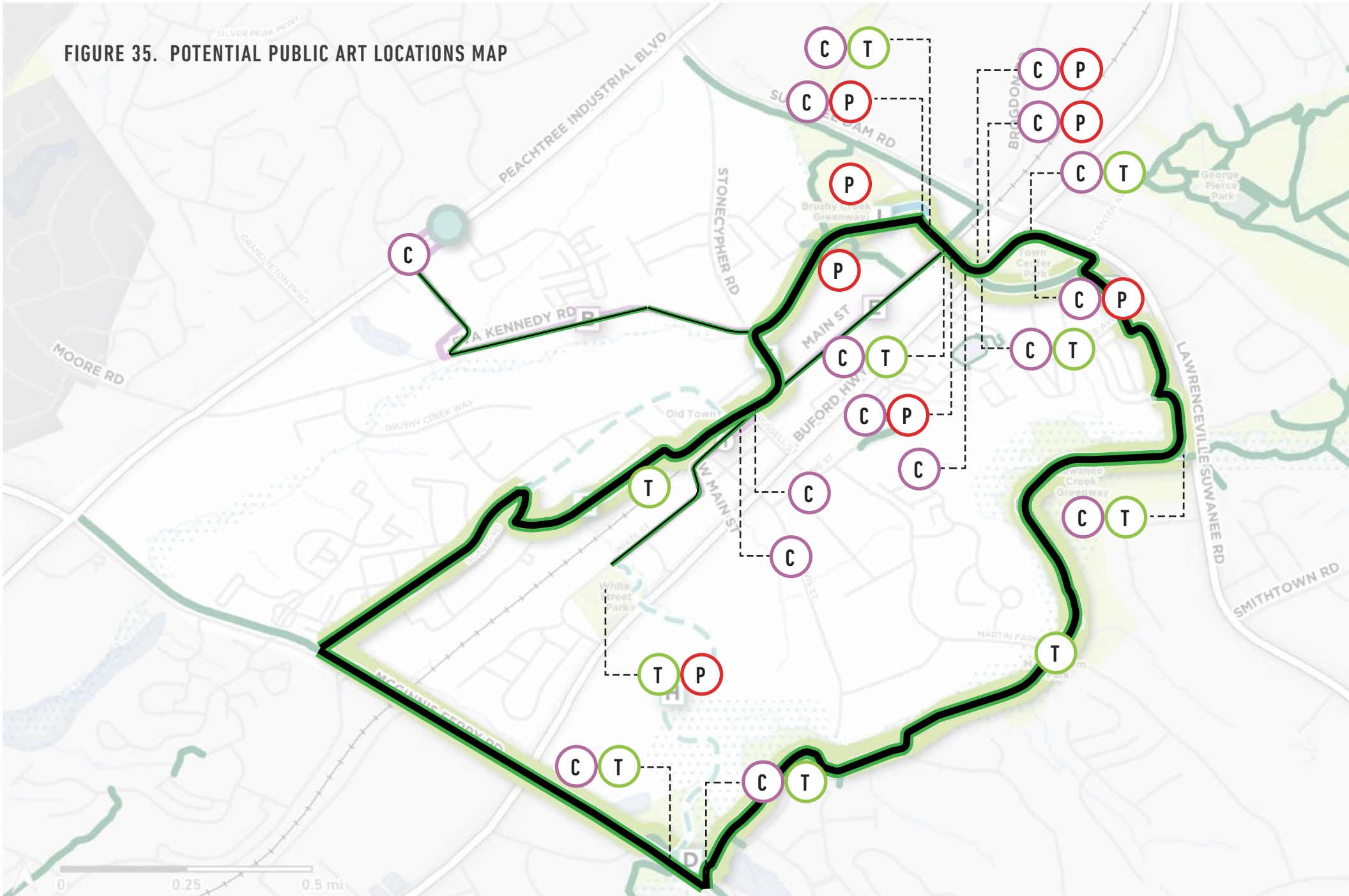
Suwanee's public art should strengthen the urban design of the city. The city should focus on artworks that promote a sense of arrival within the city overall and within its different districts, as well as artworks that help people make connections between different parts of the city, whether they are walking, biking, or driving.




Suwanee should be comfortable with the notion that much of its public art will be on view only for fixed periods of time. Art + Temporary projects could:

- Involve a more focused approach to SculptTour.
- Involve unique commissions for special times and locations

FIGURE 35. POTENTIAL PUBLIC ART LOCATIONS MAP



- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  Main Loop Route (Existing + New) |  Sidewalk Feasibility Studies |  Trail Under Construction |  Streets |  Water |  Gwinnett County |
|  Existing Trails |  New Neighborhood Connectors |  Planned County Trail |  Railroad |  Study Area | |
|  New Main Loop Segments |  Proposed Grade Separated Crossing |  Major Roads |  Parks & Greenspace |  City of Suwanee | |



8 ACTION PLAN



ACTION PLAN

The City of Suwanee has successfully implemented many of its previous plans through its laser focus on executing action plans, building and maintaining broad community support for its projects, and leveraging an array of internal and external funding sources. These same strategies will be essential to constructing the proposed sidewalks and finalizing the loop, which will take significant staff time and resources.

While there has been overwhelming consensus to implement the projects listed in this report, they must be balanced with other citywide needs and initiatives and limited funding. Historically, the city has dedicated approximately \$300,000 towards sidewalks and trail infrastructure annually, and the total estimated costs to construct the proposed projects is about \$10.6 million for the

loop trails and about \$6.8 million for the sidewalks, not including the Russell Street sidewalk that has already been funded.

This chapter summarizes action items from the previous chapters, along with costs and potential partners, and organizes them into a 5-year Work Program. It should be used as a guide for staff and regularly updated to reflect changes in available funding and other resources, or other conditions that arise and affect the feasibility or logical phasing of the proposed projects.

COST ESTIMATES

Initial, planning level cost estimates for the proposed designs were developed to approximate improvements, inform budgeting decisions, and apply for project funding. More detailed costs will be determined as each project moves into the design and engineering phase. Complete cost estimates for each of the major capital projects are available in the Appendix.

Methodology

Planning-level cost estimates were developed based on the following assumptions:

- Unit costs are based on values from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Planning Level Cost Estimation Tool, historical bid pricing from GDOT, and estimator's judgment. They are based on 2020-2021 material, equipment, and labor costs, using the most recent data available from this time period.
- All costs are in 2021 dollars and should be inflated as necessary for use in future construction years.
- All construction costs include a 30 percent contingency and 12 percent engineering cost.
- Estimates do not include costs for easement or right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, lighting, drainage, or ongoing maintenance, except where explicitly stated.

Construction costs will vary based on the ultimate project scope, timing, and economic conditions. A desktop analysis and site visits were used to identify site conditions that are likely to impact project costs, such as locations where retaining walls or bridges will be necessary. A site survey was conducted for the sidewalk feasibility studies as part of this project and will be conducted in a future phase for the loop projects to better gauge the cost impacts of these conditions. Cost contingencies included in the estimate help account for costs that cannot be determined without detailed design and survey, such as utility relocation.





FUNDING

Implementation of the proposed sidewalks, loop, and supporting projects like placemaking and stormwater management will be a significant investment, in excess of the city's typical budget allocated for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements. To implement the proposed projects, the city will need to actively pursue public and private funding opportunities to supplement its own funds, as well as consider increasing the amount of funding it dedicates to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The ARC's *Walk. Bike. Thrive! Toolkit* provides an outline of potential funding sources for municipalities in the Atlanta region looking to implement pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including local, private, regional, state, and federal sources. Table 1 summarizes the potential funding sources detailed in that report.

In addition to existing funding sources, additional federal transportation funding sources may become available as part of the congressional infrastructure package. It includes a greater focus on funding active transportation projects like the loop that make it safer and easier for people to walk and bike to local destinations, as well as projects that mitigate the negative impacts of transportation facilities, like the proposed pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. The city should continue to monitor federal infrastructure legislation and apply for funding as it becomes available.

TABLE 1. POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

	Short Term Project (< 2 Years)	Long Term Project (> 2 years)
Small Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighborhood associations ▪ Community improvement districts ▪ Crowdsourcing ▪ Non-profit grants ▪ Impact fees ▪ Infrastructure bonds ▪ Governor’s Office of Highway Safety ▪ Local taxes ▪ Foundation grants ▪ Individual donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal transportation funds ▪ Capital improvement budget funds ▪ State programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GDOT - Recreational Trails Program (Dept. of Natural Resources) - Community Development Block Grant
Big Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foundation grants ▪ Individual donors ▪ Community improvement districts ▪ Public-private partnerships ▪ Infrastructure bonds ▪ Local taxes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal transportation funds ▪ Congressional earmarks



Source: Walk. Bike. Thrive! Atlanta Regional Commission (2018)

ACTION PLAN

Many actions will be needed over the coming years to implement this vision for Suwanee's signature trail loop and to tackle some of the city's more challenging sidewalk projects. Key immediate next steps are highlighted below, followed by an action plan, outlining the key proposed projects for the next 5+ years in Table 3 on page 124.

Immediate Next Steps

1. Apply for Preliminary Engineering (PE) Funds:

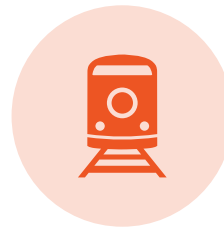
The City of Suwanee applied for the ARC's 2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Solicitation in August 2021. The program awards PE funds for projects recommended by LCI studies. If

awarded, these funds will be used to advance the design of the proposed projects. ARC will make its selections in Fall 2021.



2. Conversations with Key Stakeholders, including:

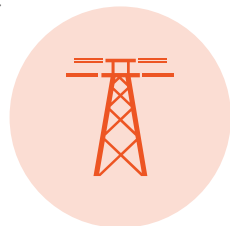
- **Norfolk Southern:** Because Norfolk Southern controls the railroad, its crossings, and the surrounding right-of-way, the city must get its support to move forward with key pieces of the proposed loop on Main Street, Russell Street, and the White Street corridor. Staff should meet with the railroad to review and refine the proposed concept in these areas.



- **GDOT and Gwinnett DOT:** Similarly, the State and County control several of the major roads in the study area, like Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Buford Highway. Staff will meet with these partner agencies to review and refine the proposed concept in their jurisdictions. Because GDOT is currently working on a project to widen Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and add a shared use path on the north side of the road in part of the project area, coordination to identify potential design modifications that will maximize project alignment should be an immediate action.

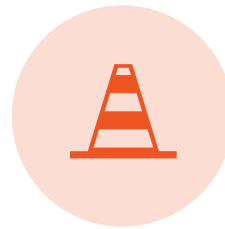


- **Georgia Power:** A portion of the loop route uses a Georgia Power utility corridor between Silver Peak Parkway and Eva Kennedy Road. Trails are considered a reasonable use of Georgia Power easements and have been installed in similar conditions in neighboring communities. Staff will meet with Georgia Power to review and refine the proposed concept on their property and initiate the easement process if deemed acceptable.



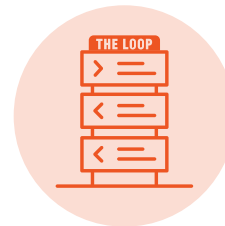
3. **Russell Street Construction:**

The city has already budgeted construction funds for the new sidewalk on Russell Street between Buford Highway and the railroad.



4. **Finalize Branding and Wayfinding Design Standards:**

Several potential logos and direction for project branding were developed as part of this project. Next, staff will select and refine a preferred name and logo and continue to develop a complete branding package, including standard wayfinding sign designs.



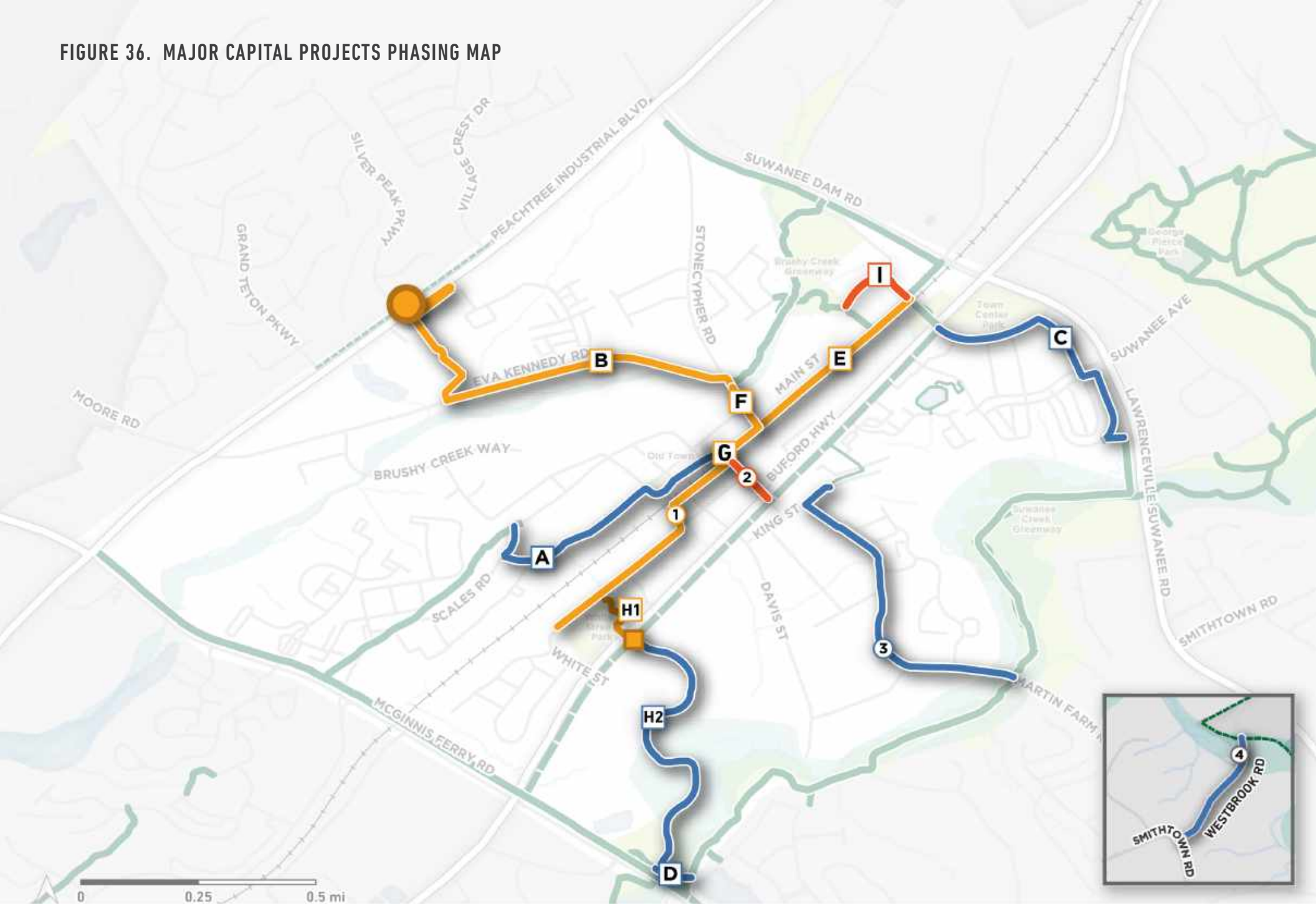
Phasing

Proposed phasing is based on feedback from the community, knowledge of working with large entities like Norfolk Southern, alignment with other ongoing projects, project lead times, and opportunities for useful continuity of facilities. Projects may be pushed up as appropriate grant or land opportunities become available or may be delayed due to funding constraints or other challenges. Major moves to develop the loop are noted in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 36, with additional detail provided in Table 3 on page 124. The years associated with each of the phases refer to project start years. While some projects may be completed within the associated years, others like multi-year capital projects may begin during that time and be completed in the following years.

TABLE 2. PHASING SUMMARY

Phase 1 (Start Years 1-2)		Phase 2 (Start Years 3-4)		Phase 3 (Start Years 5+)	
<p>Phase 1 activities will lay the groundwork for long-term success. They focus on due diligence, negotiations, right-of-way acquisition, and design for new trail segments, along with supporting activities to build financial capacity, allocate funding in the city budget, establish the brand, and grow the network of supporters. Capital projects that already have dedicated funding and are in the design phase—like the path connecting Brushy Creek Greenway to the tunnel through Town Center West and the sidewalk on Russell Street—can also be constructed during this period. Upgrades to existing trailheads at Martin Farm Park and Suwanee Creek Greenway East will improve the trail experience and begin to roll out the new brand.</p>		<p>New loop segments prioritized by the community will become the focus in Phase 2, building on the associated design, negotiation, and acquisition work accomplished in Phase 1. These projects help overcome critical community connectivity barriers—Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, the railroad, and Buford Highway—by providing more opportunities for safe and comfortable crossings. They also complete a smaller, inner loop route along Main Street, the rail corridor, White Street, Buford Highway, and the existing tunnel under the railroad.</p>		<p>Phase 3 enhances safety and comfort for neighborhood routes. Sidewalks will be added on Martin Farm Road and Westbrook Road for pedestrian safety. A multi-use path along Jackson Street and Scales Road will connect the Scales Road Trail to the loop along quiet neighborhood roads. A new bridge and boardwalk will connect the Suwanee Creek Greenway over the creek to avoid the section on McGinnis Ferry Road and improve access to trail parking. If property can be acquired, the Wetland Crossing route will provide an off-street alternative to the McGinnis Ferry Road path, upgrading the overall loop experience by minimizing time spent next to major roads.</p>	
Major Capital Projects		Major Capital Projects		Major Capital Projects	
2	Russell Street Sidewalk	B	PIB Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge, Access Path, and Eva Kennedy Road Path	3	Martin Farm Road Sidewalk
I	Town Center West Path	F	Stonecypher Road Path	D	McGinnis Ferry Trail Connection
		G	Railroad Crossing	H2	Alternative Route: Wetland Crossing (Buford Highway to McGinnis Ferry Road Bridge)
		H1	Alternative Route: Wetland Crossing (White Street to Buford Highway including below grade crossing)	C	Town Center Trail Upgrades
		E	Main Street Path	4	Westbrook Road Sidewalk
		1	White Street Path	A	Jackson Street Path

FIGURE 36. MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS PHASING MAP



- | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
|  Existing Multi-use Path | PHASE 1 |  Multi-use Path | PHASE 2 |  Multi-use Path |  Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge | PHASE 3 |  Multi-use Path |
|  Multi-use Path Under Construction |  Multi-use Path |  Multi-use Path |  Sidewalk |  Multi-use Path |  Below Grade Crossing |  Sidewalk | |
|  Gwinnett County Planned Multi-use Path |  Sidewalk |  Sidewalk | | | | | |

Projects outlined below are categorized as Phase 1 (Years 1-2), Phase 2 (Years 3-4), and Phase 3 (Years 5+). These initiatives will be led by the City of Suwanee Department of Planning with support from other departments and community partners, unless otherwise specified.

TABLE 3. 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM

Ref. #	Project	Notes	Cost Estimate	Proposed Phasing			Potential Partners
				Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	
1	Coordination with key stakeholders	Coordination with Norfolk Southern, GDOT, Gwinnett DOT, Property Owners, Georgia Power	Staff time				GDOT; Gwinnett DOT; Norfolk Southern; Georgia Power; Private Property Owners
2	Continue to pursue ongoing funding opportunities		Staff time				ARC
3	ARC TIP Solicitation Application	Submit Fall 2021 application for PE funds	Staff time				ARC
4	Conduct site surveys for new loop segments and connectors		Included in segment cost estimates				
5	Develop engineering documents for new loop segments and connectors		Included in segment cost estimates				
6	Russell Street Sidewalk Construction	5-foot sidewalk on the northeast side	\$403,000 (\$14,900 utility pole relocation add-on)				
7	Finalize and Launch Branding and Wayfinding Design Package	Develop a complete branding and wayfinding package	Staff time				Economic Development Department
8	Establish a Friends of the Loop group		Staff time				

TABLE 3. 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM (CONTINUED)



















Ref. #	Project	Notes	Cost Estimate	Proposed Phasing			Potential Partners
				Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	
9	Update suwaneeloop.com	Update the project website with the final branding, opportunities to get involved in the Friends of group, and a means to donate to the initiative	Staff time				
10	Town Center Park West Path	Multi-use path through new park	Included in park construction costs				
11	Suwanee Creek Greenway East Trailhead Upgrade	Add seating, shade structure, wayfinding, lighting, bike parking, bike repair station, trash receptables, artistic gateway, and landscape enhancements.	TBD				Downtown Development Authority
12	SPLOST program coordination	Work with Gwinnett County to identify potential project elements to be included in the next SPLOST allocation	Staff time				Gwinnett County
13	PIB Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge + Access Path + Eva Kennedy Road Path Design and Construction	8-foot to 12-foot concrete multi-use path, boardwalk, ramps, and pedestrian/bicycle bridge	\$3,166,075				
14	Stonecypher Road Path Design and Construction	12-foot concrete shared use path	\$177,309				






TABLE 3. 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

Ref. #	Project	Notes	Cost Estimate	Proposed Phasing			Potential Partners
				Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	
15	Main Street Path Design and Construction	12-foot multi-use path from Russell Street to the tunnel	\$209,813		■		Norfolk Southern
16	Rail crossing enhancements at Russell Street and Main Street	12-foot concrete multi-use path (west side), 5-foot concrete sidewalk (east side), equipment relocation	\$352,450		■		
17	White Street Path Design and Construction	8-foot multi-use path on White Street from White Street Park to Main Street NW and along rail corridor from Main Street NW to Russell Street	\$3,579,050		■		Norfolk Southern
18	Martin Farm Park Trailhead Upgrade	Additional seating, shade structure, wayfinding, lighting, bike parking, bike repair station, art, stormwater management, and potential expanded parking, and water fountains	\$1,950,000		■		
19	Main Street Park Trailhead Upgrades	As part of park renovations, add trailhead features like wayfinding, additional seating, bike parking, a bike repair station, art, and a restroom.	\$175,000		■		

TABLE 3. 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

Ref. #	Project	Notes	Cost Estimate	Proposed Phasing			Potential Partners
				Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	
20	Install additional permanent public art along existing and new loop segments (Round 1)	See Potential Public Art Locations Map for locations	Prices vary by piece. Typical ranges include: Monumental Public Art: \$50,000 to \$100,000 each Murals: \$135,000 to \$405,000 Small Scale Sculptures/Installations: \$5,000 to \$10,000		■		Economic & Community Development Department
21	Install Branded Signage	Install branded signs and other elements on existing and new loop segments	\$1,000 to \$3,000 per installation		■		
22	Martin Farm Road Sidewalk Design and Construction	5-foot sidewalk to fill missing gaps on northeast side from King Street to Suwanee Green Parkway	\$1,878,000			■	
23	Town Center Trail Upgrades Design and Construction	8-foot to 10-foot concrete shared use path, pavement markings, raised/enhanced crossings, signage	\$301,259			■	
24	Alternative Route: Wetland Crossing Design and Construction	Bridge, boardwalk, bitumen path	\$4,910,443			■	

TABLE 3. 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

Ref. #	Project	Notes	Cost Estimate	Proposed Phasing			Potential Partners
				Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	
25	McGinnis Ferry Trail Connection Design and Construction	10-foot concrete shared use path and boardwalk	\$445,000 (\$265,000 elevated overlook add-on)				
26	Suwanee Creek Greenway West Trailhead Upgrade	Add seating, shade structure, wayfinding, lighting, bike parking, bike repair station, trash receptables, artistic gateway, and landscape enhancements.	TBD				
27	Westbrook Road Sidewalk Design and Construction	5-foot sidewalk on north side from Smithtown Road to Ivy Creek Bridge	\$1,347,218				
28	Jackson Street Path Design and Construction	8-foot to 12-foot concrete multi-use path	\$1,017,755				
29	Install additional permanent public art along existing and new loop segments (Round 2)	See Potential Public Art Locations Map for locations	Prices vary by piece. Typical ranges include: Monumental Public Art: \$50,000 to \$100,000 each Murals: \$135,000 to \$405,000 Small Scale Sculptures/Installations: \$5,000 to \$10,000				Economic & Community Development Department



SUWANEЕ PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE LOOP AND SIDEWALK FEASIBILITY STUDIES

A SUPPORTING DOCUMENT OF THE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PLAN

DECEMBER 2021

