

Submitted By: Sustainability Office
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Project Classification: Environmental Protection
Project Focus: Quality of Life
Project Type: Other - Community Enhancements

Previously Submitted and Rejected: No
Continuation Project: No

Project Total Cost: \$ 4,620,000

Total Operating Cost: \$ 135,000

Project Description: The Sustainability Improvement Program will fund capital projects to enhance the sustainability of ACCGOV property. This project will prioritize capital improvements that decrease operating expenses, improve environmental health, and are not otherwise funded via the ACCGOV Capital Budget, SPLOST, or TSPLOST projects. Examples of such improvements include, but are not limited to: alternative fuel vehicle replacement; pervious pavement retrofits; water conservation retrofits at ACCGOV facilities; developing facilities to expand local food distribution; creating green roofs and on-site stormwater improvements; expanding access to recycling facilities; and/or funding equipment used for natural area restoration.

The implementation of this project will be guided by a process approved by the Mayor and Commission. The Athens Sustainability Plan, which is currently under development, can provide a guide as to what types of public capital improvements are needed to enhance community sustainability. As a compliment to the Envision Athens plan and the Comprehensive Plan, the Athens Sustainability Plan articulates a vision to grow the economy, protect the environment, and improve our community. The plan is currently in development and will be presented to the Mayor and Commission for adoption in 2019. The plan draft has eleven chapters that pair long-term goals with a list of proposed supporting actions that are to be implemented over the first five years. An additional five year work plan will be developed during the tenure of the SPLOST 2020 program. The dedication of SPLOST 2020 funding will ensure adequate resources are needed to support public sustainability enhancements, resulting in actionable outcomes that do not burden the ACCGOV capital budget.

Project Mission Statement/Goals & Objectives: The mission of the Sustainability Investment Program is to engage our community members and staff in the changes and best practices needed to transform our community, by funding capital elements that enhance resilience and improve the environment. Through this program, the community will have a designated source of funding that can be used to take action improving our facilities, reducing our impact on the environment, and

creating local economic opportunities. Goals for the project include:

- A. Implement projects equitably across the community.
- B. Implement projects in a balanced approach where approximately 1/3 of the funding is applied to projects that grow the economy, 1/3 of the funding is applied to projects that support the environment, and 1/3 of funding is applied to projects that support the needs of the community.
- C. Improve water quality by implementing water conservation and stormwater treatment improvements throughout the community.
- D. Grow local businesses and jobs by providing the facilities and infrastructure needed to support entrepreneurship.
- E. Decrease carbon emissions and save tax dollars by conserving energy.
- F. Support economic and community enhancement by supporting the development of community gardens, playground equipment, farmers markets, public art installations and related public gathering spaces.
- G. Implement projects that decrease the use of ACCGOV general budget funds.
- H. Leverage local SPLOST investments by obtaining at least \$750,000 in grants in donations to support Sustainability Investment Program projects.

Projected Useful Life of Project: Sustainability, by its very definition, implements projects that create results for current and future generations. As such, potential project elements will typically have longer useful lives. For example, capital investments for an item like alternative fuel vehicles have a life of approximately 15 years, whereas capital improvements to clean stormwater on ACCGOV property can last nearly 40 years.

To meet the Project Goals & Objectives, when should this project be completed? To be most efficient, we recommend this project be implemented evenly over the SPLOST 2020 tiers.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building System compliance: This project will not contribute to new conditioned space that triggers the implementation of the ACCGOV sustainable building policy. However, many potential Sustainability Investment Program projects, including those targeting water conservation, energy conservation, natural area restoration, and transportation improvements, can contribute towards the LEED rating at ACCGOV sites.

How will this project help meet the Public Safety, Basic Facilities/Infrastructure, and/or Quality of Life needs in Athens-Clarke County? This project will support basic facilities and infrastructure to enhance community sustainability. During traditional SPLOST project implementation, many of these elements are perceived to be "nice to have" components instead of "must have" components because sustainability inherently calls for us to set aside short-term wants to make long-term investments. For example, previous SPLOSTs and capital budgets have provided funding to maintain the facilities at Bear Hollow Zoo at Memorial Park. Yet, previous work at the zoo has not properly plumbed the animal enclosures, which results in the continuous flow of potable water from the enclosures into adjacent waterways. By addressing this problem through the Sustainability Investment Program we can extend facility life, decrease operating expenses, improve water quality, and save water so it is available for other needs in the community.

A holistic look at community sustainability requires us to consider enhancements we can make to public safety. By approaching public safety through a triple bottom line lens, we can identify both traditional and non-traditional needs of our public safety operations that enhance resilience. For example, funding from the Sustainability Investment Program could be used to purchase specialized equipment for wildland fire suppression and remote area rescue; to equip our first responders with hazardous materials response equipment needed to protect local waterways; or to provide sanitary facilities for our homeless population.

Inherently, all of the projects from the Sustainability Plan will enhance quality of life for our current and future residents. Much like the visionary citizens who invested in the first Athens greenways more than 20 years ago, these projects create an opportunity to create a legacy that is passed on to generations who come behind us. For example, funding from the Sustainability Investment Program may be used to create community gardens, increase the use of art in public spaces, support smaller pedestrian connections to local greenways, or provide for the vehicles needed to support the Meals on Wheels Program.

How is this Project recommended/included in any approved ACCGOV Land Use Plan, Master Plan, Study, Service Delivery Plan, Envision Athens, etc.? The Sustainability Plan is proposed to be a guide to support the implementation of this project. Because the Sustainability Plan is so broad in its approach, it identifies needs also identified in ACCGOV documents such as the Pedestrian/Bike Master Plan, the Workforce Housing Study, the Police Department Strategic Plan, the Public Utilities Service Delivery Plan, the Greenway Network Plan, the Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee County Regional Transportation Study, the Greenspace Program, the Comprehensive Plan, and the Envision Athens Plan. Each of these items was a foundational in the development of the sustainability plan, where our staff and stakeholder reviewed the plans, identified additional needs, and considered what the next evolution of plan implementation looks like.

The largest overlap between the Sustainability Plan and the Envision Athens plan is present in the Land Use, Environment, Housing, Agriculture, Economic Development, Safety, and Social Services chapters from the Envision Athens Plan. While the Envision Athens Action Agenda identifies the big picture needs, the Sustainability Plan creates a first look at a work plan to address those needs.

Triple Bottom Line Impacts

Positive Benefits for the Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: Approximately 1/3 of funding from the Sustainability Investment Program will be dedicated to projects that directly benefit the economic vitality of the community. Ultimately these projects can provide for the facilities and infrastructure needed to target minority business development and local entrepreneurship.

Detrimental Impacts to the Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: Because the types of projects funded by this program will vary, there will be limited impacts to the ACCGOV operating budget. This program will restrict these impacts to less than 3% of program investments and will prioritize the projects that either reduce the operating budget or are budget neutral.

Positive Benefits for our Citizens and Visitors: The Sustainability Investment Program exists to benefit the people of our community. Nature has had eons of evolution to create sustainable processes and it does not need our help to continue them. It is our interaction with and use of natural resources that requires us to

think and act differently to ensure we continue on a path of sustainability. Approximately 1/3 of the funding from the Sustainability Investment Program will be dedicated to community projects that benefit our citizens.

Detrimental Impacts for our Citizens and Visitors: N/A

Environmental Benefits, including but not limited to Positive impacts on existing Infrastructure/Systems: Approximately 1/3 of funding from the Sustainability Investment Program will be dedicated to projects that directly benefit the environment. Capital projects to enhance the environment may include projects to enhance waste diversion, restore wetlands, conserve water, increase access to composting, improve water quality, and restore forests across the community.

In addition to developing the Sustainability Plan, the ACCGOV Sustainability Office is working on several grant-funded projects that identify the location and abundance levels of important natural resources in our community. We are currently working on initiatives to identify the locations of the oldest forests in Athens, to identify areas that lack riparian buffer integrity, and to look at where protected greenspaces are located throughout the community. As these projects are completed, we can more accurately begin to identify the areas that either lack access to these resources or are at risk of losing access to them. Knowing this will allow us to focus our environmental projects in the most critical areas in the community.

Detrimental Impacts for the Environment, including but not limited to Negative impacts on existing Infrastructure/Systems: The focus of the Sustainability Investment Program is to generate positive outcomes and benefits to the environment. Negative impacts, if there are any, are anticipated to be minimal (ex: the development of a new community garden in a neighborhood that lacks access to food may result in the removal of a few trees). Before implementing any project, significant consideration will be given as to whether the temporary and limited environmental impacts will be offset by the benefits provided.

Positive/Negative Impacts on ACCGOV Departments, Agencies, or other Organizations, if not covered in one of the above questions: Because Sustainability Investment Programs projects bring together multiple departments, community agencies, and citizens, funding significantly enhances cross-department cooperation, promotes government/citizen interaction, and encourages communication, resulting in greater community satisfaction with government, a more engaged citizenry, and enhanced government services and effectiveness.

Project Costs

Detailed project capital budget costs (to be funded from SPLOST 2020 only):

Project Costs (round to thousand)	Amount
1. Land Acquisition / ROW / Easement:	\$ -
2. Design Fees: (Min.12% of New Const.; 14% of reno.; 16% for LEED proj.)	\$ 210,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: (Min. Minimum of 3% of Construction Costs – used for permitting, etc. Utilize minimum of 10% if land acquisition if necessary.)	\$ 45,000
4. Fixtures, Furniture, and Equipment (for a facility): A detailed estimate is preferred – but dependent upon the specific project, utilize at a minimum \$15 to \$20 per square foot.	\$ 400,000
5. Construction:	\$ 1,100,000
6. Construction Contingency: (10% of the Construction line item)	\$ 110,000
7. Acquisition of Capital Equipment:	\$ 2,000,000
8. Testing:	\$ 45,000
9. Project Management: (4% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 157,000
10. Project Contingency: (10% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 407,000
11. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	\$ 11,000
12. Other 1:	\$ -
13. Other 2:	\$ -
Project Subtotal:	\$ 4,485,000
14. Program Management (3% of Project Subtotal):	\$ 135,000
SPLOST 2020 Project Total:	\$ 4,620,000

Operating Cost

Total Annual Net Operating Costs when Project is complete:

Only identify additional or net operating costs to be paid by ACCGOV. Identify the additional or net costs needed above ACCGOV's current operating budget to operate the requested project and any additional project related revenues that would be generated. Provide budget costs for each identified category below.

Operating Costs (round to thousand)	Estimated Impact for Annual Operating Expenditures
TOTAL PROJECTED REVENUES FROM PROJECT	-
PROJECTED EXPENDITURES	
1. Personnel Costs: from Appendix A	-
2. Annual Utilities:	
• Gas:	-
• Electrical:	-
• Water:	-
• Sewer:	-
• Phone:	-
• Solid Waste Collection:	-
• Other:	-
3. Operating Supplies:	-
4. Equipment Maintenance:	-
5. Facility Maintenance:	-
6. Fuel:	-
7. Other: Capped at 3% of Core Project Budget	135,000
8. Other:	-
9. Other:	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	135,000
NET OPERATING COSTS OF PROJECT:	\$ 135,000

Project Financing

Is the proposed Project to receive funding from source(s) other than SPLOST 2020? No

Project Site

Will the proposed Project require any land, whether existing sites, new site, easements, or Rights of Way? No