

Submitted By: Friends of Five Points Neighborhood Organization
Paul Stutz
Phone: (706) 207-0050 Alt. Phone:
Email: pstutz@taylorsironco.com

Project Classification: Social Well-Being
Project Focus: Quality of Life
Project Type: Intersection Improvements (Select if the primary purpose of the project is intersection improvements)

Previously Submitted and Rejected: No
Continuation Project: No

Project Total Cost: \$ 1,862,000

Total Operating Cost: \$ 2,000

Project Description: The goal of this project is to improve the safety and vitality of the Five Points intersection. The proposed improvements will: 1) create a safer intersection based on human-centered design to encourage active transportation (i.e. walking and cycling) and provide visible cues to drivers that the intersection is more than just a thoroughfare; 2) improve the safety associated with turning UGA and ACC transit buses at the intersection; and 3) create small public spaces at the node that provide improved aesthetics, safety, and community connectivity. The proposed pedestrian and safety improvements are represented in the attached sketch, and will include:

- (a) the relocation of existing crosswalks to shorten and improve pedestrian walk time;
- (b) decorative crosswalks to draw more awareness of pedestrian crossing and meet public art requirement;
- (c) conversion of the existing strain poles to mast arms;
- (d) improved pedestrian ramps;
- (e) improved landscaped pedestrian refuges at each corner;
- (f) evaluation of curb radii at key corners of the intersection (Corner radii (<https://bit.ly/2FfGdKN>) directly impact vehicle turning speeds and pedestrian crossing distances. Minimizing the size of a corner radius reduces turning speeds, but must be balanced with the requirements of transit buses and emergency vehicles.);
- (g) updated signal control and timing; and
- (h) an overall reduction in car/bike/pedestrian conflict points.

Many Athens residents and visitors travel through the Five Points node every day, whether commuting to UGA or downtown, or crossing through town on Milledge Avenue to connect with areas served by Atlanta Highway or Prince Avenue. Many UGA students living off campus along Milledge Avenue or adjacent residential streets drive, walk, or take the bus through Five Points to get

to UGA. Many families living in the Barrow Elementary and Clarke Central High School zones walk or cycle to the schools, located just a short distance away from the intersection. Many Athens-Clarke County residents have expressed concern about intersection safety for years. The ACC Department of Transportation and Public Works has also identified this intersection as an area of concern, and has already implemented some measures, such as signal timing adjustments, to improve safety. However, the upcoming SPLOST provides an opportunity to take a more comprehensive look at the intersection and improve safety for all who use it.

Project Mission Statement/Goals & Objectives: The mission of this project is to improve the safety and vitality of the Five Points intersection using an approach that addresses priorities established by Envision Athens, Athens in Motion and the 2018 Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan. The primary goal is to create a safer, more accessible, vibrant and walkable Five Points node that connects downtown Athens and UGA with adjacent residential and commercial communities. We aim to realize this goal by accomplishing the following objectives: 1) Create a safer intersection based on human-centered design to encourage active transportation (i.e. walking and cycling) and provide visible cues to drivers that the intersection is more than just a thoroughfare; 2) Implement measures that increase safety associated with turning UGA and ACC transit buses at the intersection; and 3) Create small public spaces at the node that provide improved aesthetics, safety, and community connectivity.

The Five Points intersection has become a major hub of transportation and commercial activity in Athens. Five Points serves not only the entire community and surrounding counties but also visitors from around the region. According to GDOT, there are 15,700, 12,200, and 2,070 trips per day on South Milledge Avenue, South Lumpkin Street, and Milledge Circle, respectively. Surrounded by a large residential community, Five Points is one of the more walkable areas of Athens. However, pedestrian and cyclist safety in the area is a major concern, in particular at the intersection itself. South Milledge Avenue is a principal arterial, Lumpkin Street is an urban minor collector, and Milledge Circle is an urban collector, moving cars and transit buses throughout the city, and serving as primary roads connecting UGA and downtown to the Athens Perimeter highway and beyond.

Five-way intersections are notoriously challenging throughout the country. A quick internet search reveals a number of communities working to address the traffic and safety issues associated with them. The geometry of this intersection is such that the crosswalks are unusually long, and the properties abutting the intersection are not uniformly shaped. Some of the creative solutions other communities have used to address similar problems, such as roundabouts or a complete transformation of the intersection are not feasible due to existing buildings and infrastructure. The goal of this project is intended to address all modes of transportation.

Projected Useful Life of Project: We anticipate this project having a 50+ year useful life and tying in to larger initiatives throughout the community, such as the projects identified by Athens in Motion.

There is a potentially important connection between this project and the Athens In Motion plan,

which recommends a bike lane and shared use path on Milledge Avenue as a "Tier One Bicycle Project." If a bike lane and/or shared use path were added to Milledge Avenue, this project could either include or pave the way for the addition of bike boxes and ingress lanes at the Lumpkin Street and South Milledge Avenue approaches to the intersection. A bike box (<https://bit.ly/2Pov8M0>) is a designated area at the head of a traffic lane at a signalized intersection that provides bicyclists with a safe and visible way to get ahead of queuing traffic during the red signal phase. An ingress lane defines the bicycle space and provides cyclists ability to legally access the bike box.

To meet the Project Goals & Objectives, when should this project be completed? We anticipate this project taking a maximum of 24 months from initial concept to project completion. This project could mobilize relatively quickly and be one of the first projects executed under the 2020 SPLOST program. This project would be highly visible in the community and demonstrate an immediate positive benefit from the SPLOST funds. We anticipate the following timeline:

12 months: Project planning, design and engineering

6 months: Project approval by Mayor and Commission and SPLOST Committee

12 months: Solicit bids and project construction

The project planning and design phase will be a transparent process. We have already begun soliciting input from Five Points residents and will continue to solicit input from them as well as the wider community if the project is selected.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building System compliance: Although the proposed project does not have specific components that require LEED certification, LEED principles, such as smart growth, reversing contribution to global climate change, and enhancing social equity, community health, and quality of life will guide the process. In particular, LEED for Neighborhood Development guidelines (<https://bit.ly/2RMhPIC>) integrate principles of smart growth, urbanism and green building into its national rating system. The best practices encouraged by LEED-ND are:

- 1) Promoting the location and design of neighborhoods that reduce vehicle miles traveled
- 2) Creating developments where jobs and services are accessible by foot or public transit
- 3) Promoting an array of green building and green infrastructure practices, particularly for more efficient energy and water use
- 4) Protecting and conserving habitat, wetlands, water bodies, and prime agricultural lands through the maintenance of natural areas and "smart location" choices

While the proposed project directly connects to the first two of the above principles, it indirectly connects to the fourth principle, as we will not increase impervious surfaces and thus do not anticipate any negative impacts to stormwater quantity and quality or important habitat or water bodies. Finally, the current street lighting used in Five Points is already LED, and we anticipate using existing lighting.

How will this project help meet the Public Safety, Basic Facilities/Infrastructure, and/or Quality of Life needs in Athens-Clarke County? A safe, vibrant, walkable Five Points helps move Athens toward its shared

vision of neighborhoods as vibrant, stable and safe places with a culture of healthy lifestyles and civic engagement and increased range of transportation options that provide efficient, safe, affordable and equitable access throughout the community. (See pgs 12-13 of the Community & Economic Development Strategic Plan, a.k.a. The Envision Athens Action Agenda.)

The proposed project helps meet Quality of Life needs for residents throughout Athens Clarke County. As a major hub of transportation, commercial, retail and residential activity, Five Points is an area that draws people from throughout the county and beyond. With its vibrant small business community, Five Points attracts not only visitors to retail establishments, but also places of employment. Increasing the safety of transportation options to and through the intersection of S. Milledge Avenue and S. Lumpkin Street increases access for everyone.

Based on comments from the Athens In Motion Interactive Map this project is supported by the Five Points community. As more families and retirees have chosen to call the Five Points area home, demand has increased for improved safety, walkability, bikeability, and access to public transit. In an on-line survey conducted by the Friends of Five Points neighborhood association in early 2018, of 206 responders, 76% were in favor of changes to the intersection that would improve pedestrian safety, and 74% were in favor of changes that would improve the aesthetics of the intersection. This project can potentially improve the quality of life for families walking children to local schools near Five Points, safety for business patrons and residents of all ages, and improve overall driver safety and efficiency for cars traveling through the intersection.

How is this Project recommended/included in any approved ACCGOV Land Use Plan, Master Plan, Study, Service Delivery Plan, Envision Athens, etc.? This project will take place at the intersection of S. Milledge Avenue, S. Lumpkin Street., and Milledge Circle. The entirety of Milledge Avenue has been identified by Athens in Motion as a Tier 1 Bicycle Project, indicating its high priority amongst the projects. This proposed intersection safety improvement project, while not explicitly included in any of the above referenced plans, is identified as a barrier to walking and biking as well as a destination in Athens in Motion's online interactive map.

By improving the safety of this important node, the proposed project helps Athens move toward several of the goals identified by Athens in Motion (see Table 1-1 of the AIM document), including connectivity (connected network of low-stress bicycle and pedestrian facilities), equity (improve safe access to opportunity for all citizens of ACC), more users (encourage those who not normally use active transportation to use the network for trips), and implementation (provide a variety of different funding mechanisms to finance and maintain the network).

Triple Bottom Line Impacts

Positive Benefits for the Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: This project creates more pedestrian connectivity in the Five Points node, which makes the intersection and its commercial district safer. This encourages increased patronage of local businesses with less impact on vehicular traffic. The increased success of these businesses creates better wages, more job opportunities, particularly in the retail and accommodation and food services sectors, and more sales tax revenue for the entire county.

Encouraging successful business in Five Points translates into a vibrant business community comprised of many locally-owned businesses. Examples include Condor Chocolates, Avid Bookshop, Independent Bakery, Add Drug, The Pine, Last Resort Grill Provisions, Hodgson's Pharmacy, and The Royal Peasant, to name a just a few. An oft-cited 2003 study (<https://ilsr.org/wp-content/uploads/files/midcoaststudy.pdf>) conducted by the Institute for Local Self Reliance found that (as summarized by the American Independent Business Alliance (<https://www.amiba.net/resources/multiplier-effect/>):

"...for every dollar spent at a locally-owned establishment, nearly 45% of that revenue stayed in the local community with another 9% being spent elsewhere in the state. These expenditures included employee wages/benefits, inventory, supplies, and services from other local businesses, profits accrued to the local owners, state and local taxes, and charitable contributions. In contrast, for every dollar spent at a chain store, only 14% of the revenue stayed in the local community, mostly in the form of payroll. The balance of that money flows to out-of-state suppliers, or back to the parent corporation. Based on these numbers, three times as much money stays in your community when shopping at a locally-owned business vs. shopping at a chain store."

This study is one of many that indicate the same trend: locally-owned business are better for the local economy. This project will indirectly benefit locally-owned businesses, which will increase sales tax revenue and thus the prosperity of Athens-Clarke County.

Detrimental Impacts to the Prosperity of Athens-Clarke County: Tax referendums like SPLOST are viewed in a negative light by many people. Some are simply against the notion of increasing taxes - any taxes - at all. Others view a regressive tax (like sales tax) as unfair and disproportionately affecting those with lower income. SPLOST referendums tend to pass in Athens-Clarke County, but not without controversy.

Positive Benefits for our Citizens and Visitors: This project will have positive benefits for residents and visitors to Athens-Clarke County. The project improves government effectiveness, in particular the Department of Transportation and Public Works, by addressing traffic impacts and safety at the Five Points intersection. The project includes the re-timing of existing signals and improves transit turning movements at the intersection. It increases pedestrian safety and decreases transit on vehicle conflicts with cyclists. All of these line up with and support more effective Department of Transportation and Public Works' operations.

By connecting with planned alternative transportation corridors outlined in the Athens in Motion plan, the project addresses equity by providing greater access to Five Points and its amenities by the larger Athens-Clarke County community.

A safe, vibrant, walkable, more accessible Five Points enhances the livability for all of Athens. Due to its importance as a thoroughfare or destination in Athens, a safer Five Points node is important for all of Athens-Clarke County. As Athens moves towards its shared vision of strong neighborhoods, increased public safety, equitable access, healthy lifestyles and an increased range of transportation options, the Five Points node has an important role to play.

Detrimental Impacts for our Citizens and Visitors: Access to the construction area may be inconvenient for all modes of transportation. Efforts will be made to provide appropriate access for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and vehicular traffic throughout the course of construction. Based on conversations with staff from the Department of Transportation and Public Works these impacts will be kept to an absolute minimum. All work will be coordinated with the Georgia Department of Transportation, the University of Georgia, law enforcement and public fire and safety agencies, utility owners, local businesses, and residents.

Environmental Benefits, including but not limited to Positive impacts on existing Infrastructure/Systems: The proposed project aims to convert future vehicular traffic to "active transportation," like pedestrian and cycling. Enhanced traffic efficiency and less vehicular traffic improves local air quality and decreases contribution of greenhouse gases. The project would incorporate some new, small green spaces, and we anticipate a net reduction in impervious areas.

Detrimental Impacts for the Environment, including but not limited to Negative impacts on existing Infrastructure/Systems: There will be land disturbance related to the construction, however all required Best Management Practices (BMP's) will be funded through this project to reduce negative impacts the environment. This project has limited impact to existing infrastructure. Some utility coordination will be required.

Positive/Negative Impacts on ACCGOV Departments, Agencies, or other Organizations, if not covered in one of the above questions: This proposed capital improvement project meets a need for pedestrian and intersection improvements that are not currently funded by government operations or routine maintenance. The proposed safety improvements directly address concerns expressed by the Department of Transportation and Public Works, including the need to shorten existing crosswalks for improved signal operations and the addition of bike boxes to address bike safety at the intersection. This project also addresses transit concerns and movements between S. Milledge Avenue. and Lumpkin Street. The proposed improvements would have a positive impact to ACCGOV Departments, GDOT, UGA and local businesses.

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:	\$ 250,000
2. Design Fees: (Min.12% of New Const.; 14% of reno,; 16% for LEED proj.)	\$ 120,000
3. Miscellaneous Fees: (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.	\$ 10,000
5. Construction:	\$ 1,000,000
6. Construction Contingency: (10% of the Construction line item)	\$ 100,000
7. Acquisition of Capital Equipment:	\$ -
8. Testing:	\$ 45,000
9. Project Management: (4% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 63,000
10. Project Contingency: (10% of the total budget line items above)	\$ 164,000
11. Public Art: Calculated at 1% of the Construction line item.	\$ 10,000
12. Other 1:	\$ -
13. Other 2:	\$ -
Project Subtotal:	\$ 1,807,000
14. Program Management (3% of Project Subtotal):	\$ 55,000
SPLOST 2020 Project Total:	\$ 1,862,000

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: Landscaping	2,000
8. Other:	-
9. Other:	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	-
NET OPERATING COSTS OF PROJECT:	\$ 2,000

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? Yes

Will the proposed Project be on a site currently owned by ACCGOV? Yes

Approximately how many acres is available or will be needed for the new facility or Park? _1 acre

Project Location/Address (Existing or Proposed):

Existing intersection of S. Milledge Ave, S. Lumpkin St, and Milledge Cir

Will the Project require fee simple additional land acquisition? Yes

Will the Project require Rights-of-Way or Easement acquisition? Yes

Site Criteria and Standards

Current Property Owner (if applicable): Yes

Minimum acreage necessary for Project. 10,000 SF

Topography: Minimal

Estimated cost per acre: \$1,000,000 per acre

Location/Accessibility

Define location relative to the Project's service area that best meets the Goals and Objectives.

Location is currently accessible by all modes of transportation, including pedestrians and cyclist.

If necessary to meet the Goals and Objectives, describe what types of vehicular access will be required.

No additional vehicular access is required.

If necessary to meet the Goals and Objectives, describe what types of pedestrian access will be required.

Proposed improvements are focused on improving pedestrian access and safety.

If necessary to meet the Goals and Objectives, describe what types of Bicycle access will be required.

Proposed improvements will support cyclist access.