



Background:

Coweta County is currently completing an update to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Future Development Map to provide a vision for the community's future and a plan to implement that vision. It also identifies key issues and opportunities that the community wishes to address during the next 20 years, a list of policies to be followed in making day-to-day decisions, and a detailed Short-Term Work Program that outlines what actions the community will focus on over the next 5 years. The update process, including public involvement has been ongoing since 2004. During this process, the County developed a Growth Management Strategy to reflect the community's vision in managing anticipated growth and land use patterns in the community. Implementation Tools are now necessary to realize the community desires identified in the County's Updated Comprehensive Plan and Growth Management Strategy, thus the County retained consultants to develop the necessary implementation tools. This document summarizes and presents the Coweta County Greenway Master Plan tool.

Through numerous community meetings and coordination between the County and the County's Consultant during the Comprehensive Plan Update process, the need for a Greenway/Conservation Character Area was determined. The following community desires were identified for the Greenway/Conservation Character Area.

- Protect water quality and natural habitats.
- Set aside land for a network of Greenways to link pedestrians, residential areas, and community facilities.
- Interconnect adjacent trails, recreation areas, and greenspace where possible.
- Provide appropriate way finding along trails.
- Take special care in siting underground utilities and overhead power lines.

To realize the above community desires, the Coweta County Greenway Master Plan was created to identify where to set aside land for a network of Greenways for use by pedestrians, equestrians, bicycles, skaters, and golf carts that link parks and recreation areas with residential areas, population centers such as Crossroad Communities, Mill Villages, and existing Town Centers. The Greenway Master Plan also recommends appropriate way finding along the Greenway trails and identifies appropriate areas and funding sources for fee-simple acquisition. Two Open House Community Meetings, a meeting with representatives of the equestrian community and agriculture extension service, and multiple work group meetings with the County were held to receive community and County feedback during the creation of the Greenway Master Plan.

Coweta County Greenway Master Plan:

Typically, Greenways are natural areas along a lake, stream, highway, railroad, or other linear feature managed for conservation, recreation, and pedestrian or bike connectivity. Often Greenways contain trails. Greenways and their corresponding trails have many benefits as listed below.

- Economic Development
- Recreation, Health and Fitness
- Alternative Transportation
- Floodplain and Watershed Management
- Water and Air Quality Improvement
- Stewardship and Habitat Restoration
- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Education



A Greenway trail is a recreation corridor intended for the use of non-motorized alternate forms of transportation such as, but not limited to, walking, running, bicycles, in-line skates, and equestrians. Future provisions are being made by the County for golf carts to be permitted where designated by the Coweta County Greenway Master Plan. Article 24 Development Regulations establishes two types of Greenway trails for Coweta County as well as general requirements for all multi use trails. These requirements include easement widths, trail dimensions and materials, construction standards, rules and regulations of Greenway trail use and signage. In order to provide for safety, emergency access and service vehicles, the Development Regulations contain a minimum width, vertical clear zone and shoulder requirements for trails. Below is the description of the two trail types.

- **Hard Surface Trails:** Permitted users: walkers, joggers, bicyclists, strollers, rollerbladers, golf carts, where designated on the Coweta County Greenway Master Plan, and other non-motorized forms of transportation. Equestrian uses are not permitted on hard surface trails. The Greenway Master Plan displays two breakdowns of hard surface trails:
 - Hard Surface Trails – Allows all user types of hard surface trails, minimum 8' wide.
 - Golf Cart Trails – Allows all user types of hard surface trails as well as golf carts, minimum 10' wide.
- **Soft Surface trails:** Permitted users: equestrian, walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and strollers. The Greenway Master Plan displays two breakdowns of soft surface trails:
 - Soft Surface Trails - Allows all user types of soft surface trails, minimum 8' wide.
 - Equestrian Trails – Only allows equestrian users, minimum 8' wide.

The Coweta County Greenway Master Plan proposes a network of pedestrian connections utilizing existing road corridors, upgraded road corridors, and railroad corridors. In general, implementation should be based on opportunities for funding, right-of-way, coincidence with other planned projects, ease of construction, and support by elected officials and the community. Below is a description of the Greenway trail types and locations.

- **Hard-surface Multi-use Trail with Motorized use:**

There are approximately 136 miles of hard surface multi-use trail planned. Approximately 66 miles will allow golf cart use as well as bike/ped users. A 14 mile segment of this type of trail is identified as a Rails-to-Trails project. Hard surface trail with motorized use is recommended for northeastern Coweta, east of Interstate 85 and north of State Route 16 East because this area is part of the Infill Neighborhood Character Area described in the Coweta County Comprehensive Land Use Plan and shown on the Future Development Map. This character area is Coweta's most populated unincorporated area. Seven (7) trailheads are proposed to provide trail access within this area. Five (5) of the trailheads are located on publicly owned property adjacent to existing public facilities where parking will accommodate access for hikers, bikers, strollers, and skaters. Two (2) trailheads are located where destination development is expected to take place and where access by motorized golf carts could facilitate reduction of local automobile traffic. Hard surface trail will connect Coweta residents with the communities of Senoia, Sharpsburg, and Turin. The Rails-To-Trails segment is aligned with Norfolk Southern Corporation right-of-way. Future business plans of the railroad company could result in release of the right-of-way to Coweta County. The Rails-To-Trails segment extends from the Newnan city limit eastward for 14 miles through Senoia and into Spalding County and continues as part of a regional Rails-To-Trails project. Recognition of this regional plan by incorporating this segment into the Greenway Master Plan prepares Coweta for participation should the opportunity arise.



- **Hard Surface Multi-Use Trail no Motorized Vehicles permitted:**
No motorized vehicles are allowed on these trail surface types. The plan recommends approximately 55 miles for bike/ped users with golf carts prohibited. This type of Greenway trail is located in northern Coweta where users are expected to be hikers, skaters, and cyclists. The loops are much longer with five (5) trailheads that are 3-6 miles apart. Three (3) trailheads are located where recreation area has been acquired for future development, and two (2) are co-located with existing facilities that are large enough to accommodate trailhead parking.
- **Soft Surface Multi-Use Trail:**
The soft surface trails are located in the southern, western, and northwestern Rural Conservation Character Area. Due to level of use, the Greenway trails through Infill Neighborhood areas utilize hard surface materials while the Greenway trails in the Rural Conservation Areas utilize soft surface materials where hiking, mountain biking and equestrian users dominate. There are approximately 152 miles of soft surface multi-use trails planned. Within this classification of trails, approximately 38 miles in western Coweta will accommodate equestrian users. There are six trailheads planned as access points for the soft surface multi-use trails. Four of these trailheads will each provide area for parking horse trailers as well as a separate area for automobiles. Where there is an equestrian and bike/ped interface in the Greenway, two 8 foot wide soft surface trails are recommended within the 25 foot Greenway right-of-way. The trails should be separated by an undeveloped median to prevent unexpected encounters between these two sets of users. Signage should be used extensively to guide users to appropriate trails and parking areas.

Trailheads, a key component of the Greenway Master Plan, provide access to various trail systems and provide directional information. Throughout the network of Greenway trails proposed by the Greenway Master Plan, trailheads are located in key areas to provide Greenway trail users with amenities such as, parking, restrooms, gathering space with picnic tables, and other staging facilities as needed. Trailheads with equestrian amenities, which include trailer parking and staging areas, are proposed for four trailheads on the Greenway Master Plan. Bollards and split rail fencing should be used to control vehicular access at trailheads. Typically, trailheads are located amongst existing facilities and community landmarks such as greenspace, parks and community centers, and other publicly owned property that can be used as a trailhead without hindrance to adjacent public use. On hard surface trails, trailheads are located approximately 3-6 miles apart.

Signage:

As stated in Article 24 Development Regulations, all multi-use trail signage shall meet the standards of Part 9 of the Municipal Uniform Traffic Code Division (MUTCD). In addition, Mile/kilo/elevation designation marker signage shall be posted on all multi-use trails for user safety at a maximum increment of one-half (1/2) mile. Other way finding recommendations include trail maps and trail etiquette rules and regulations signage to be available and visible at all trailheads and key rest areas. Implementing a naming system for all trails and incorporating naming into signage is recommended. It's also recommended that paved Greenway trails shall be marked with dashed centerline stripes and stop stripes at intersections. Centerline striping encourages trail users to keep right, except when passing. At street intersections, bollards in combination with signage, painted crosswalks and rumble strips should be utilized to alert and limit vehicular access.

Maintenance:

Source – The Path Foundation. www.pathfoundation.org



- No Greenway trails should be built until a comprehensive, fully funded maintenance program has been established by the County.
- Plan and design maintenance into trails by utilizing trail and trail amenity materials that are durable and reduce maintenance needs.
- Typical maintenance issues consist of:
 - Occasional mowing and/or bush hogging
 - Trash removal
 - Sweeping/blowing debris from trail
 - Leveling gravel / correcting erosion
 - Clearing debris from culverts
 - Cleaning signs and rest area furniture
 - Landscape maintenance – tree and shrub pruning
 - Restroom maintenance
 - Removal of fallen trees/tree limbs
 - Weed control
 - Trail repair
- In addition to the County's maintenance program, an adopt-a-trail program where volunteers assist with maintenance should be established. Volunteers can provide enhanced maintenance by such tasks as advising maintenance crews of problems, landscape maintenance and removing trash along the trails.
- According to the PATH Foundation, the cost of maintaining the trails in metro Atlanta during the period of 2000-2005 was \$8,000 per mile, per year. This is information the County can use to establish an annual budget each year for maintenance.

Security and Safety:

Trails are often patrolled by users and user presence is a deterrent to crime. County police patrols may need to occur on bicycles, ATV's or by foot in order to give most people the level of security they desire. According to the PATH Foundation, bicycle patrol in Atlanta, Dekalb, Cobb and Paulding County has been extraordinarily successful and provided opportunities for police to interact with neighbors. In addition, law enforcement, fire/rescue and field maintenance personnel should be consulted in the design and review process.

Implementation:

Coweta County realizes the importance of interconnectivity by proactively creating the Greenway Master Plan and they are in the process of completing the first step toward implementation by adopting the Greenway Master Plan, as well as, the multi-use trail design standards established in the County-wide Development Regulations. The next step for Coweta County is to seek, where appropriate, partnerships with and resources from public, not-for-profit, and/or other private organizations to maximize funding alternatives, public engagement, and development of Greenway trails. Public and private sector individuals or groups should be identified to forward and promote the Greenway Master Plan. This may include State Legislature for state funding, U.S. Senator and Congressman for federal assistance, local government officers and community members. The Greenway Master Plan should be submitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission and Chattahoochee Flint RDC for inclusion in Regional Transportation Plan, Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan, and other regional plans. Prior to the construction of any Greenway trails, the County will also need to establish a Maintenance Program and a funding source for the program. The County may also want to adopt policies for acquiring right-of-way or easements from



private property owners for the Greenway trails. Public ownership or public easement will insure a public interest in the land to transfer liability to the local government.

The County should identify and develop a successful segment/phase of the Greenway trails to serve as an example or model for future phases. As stated by the Path Foundation, "Model trails are the key to mass support and funding for the remainder of the system."

Below is a list of potential partners and funding sources for the Coweta County Greenway Master Plan.

- PATH Foundation
- Developers/Homeowner Associations
- Volunteers – adopt-a-trail participants or sponsors
- Endowment from philanthropic or other sources
- Local Governments
- Board of Educations
- County Library System
- County Departments
- Bicycle Organizations
- Equestrian Organizations
- County Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)
- Impact Fees (Local)
- State Funds/Local Representative
- Federal Funds/Congressional District
- Georgia DNR, Division of Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites – Recreation Trails Program, Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Georgia Department of Transportation – Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program
- Atlanta Regional Commission – Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Resources:

- The PATH Foundation - www.pathfoundation.org
- Chattahoochee Hill Country Regional Greenway Plan – Prepared by: The PATH Foundation
- Dekalb's Greenway Trails – Prepared by: The PATH Foundation, MDG, Inc.
- Rockdale River Trail Master Plan – Prepared by: The PATH Foundation, Ecos Environmental Design, Inc.
- Georgia Department of Transportation - www.dot.state.ga.us
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division
www.gastateparks.org
- American Trails - <http://www.americantrails.org>



Example Images:



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Cowet



