



Kimberly W. Nesbitt
Team Delivery Administrator

The proposed enhancement project is a 10-ft wide trail is proposed from Cedar Crossing Vidalia Road to downtown Vidalia ending at Main St/US 280/SR 15/SR 29/SR 30 in Toombs County, GA pedestrian and bicycle use. Where the trail is directly adjacent to a wall, barrier or fence, the trail will be widened by one-foot, resulting in a 12-ft wide trail where walls, barriers or fences would be present on both sides. The trail is approximately 2.6 miles long. The trail will follow the existing abandoned railroad alignment and stay within the existing right-of-way. Grading and drainage improvements are anticipated along the trail within existing right-of-way. Pedestrian lighting will be provided at the at-grade crossing locations. Pedestrian bridges are anticipated at Rocky Creek, over W 1st St, and a possible third pedestrian bridge or culvert is anticipated at the stream crossing between W 4th St. and W 5th St. Fiber conduit for future camera connection will run along the alignment. Landscape buffers to minimize impacts to adjacent property owners and site furnishing improvements at select locations along the trail corridor are anticipated.

Negotiated Bid: _____
Menu of Service Design: _____
Full PDP with concept report: _____ or Full
PDP without concept report¹: _____ X

The project will utilize IIJA funds and matched with state funds for ROW & CST phases. The project scope requires review and approval from the following signatures:

_____ Chief Engineer

_____ Director of Engineering

_____ Director of Program Delivery

_____ State Transportation Planning Administrator

¹Approval of this charter and synopsis package will be used in-lieu of approved concept report.

Deviations from the project scope will require approval from the Director of Program Delivery or his/her designee. Requests for changes in scope should be submitted to the Office of Program Delivery.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATE OF GEORGIA**

PROJECT CHARTER

VIDALIA RAIL TRAIL FM DOWNTOWN VIDALIA TO CEDAR CROSSING RD

P.I. Number: 0019218
Toombs County

County: Toombs

Project Location

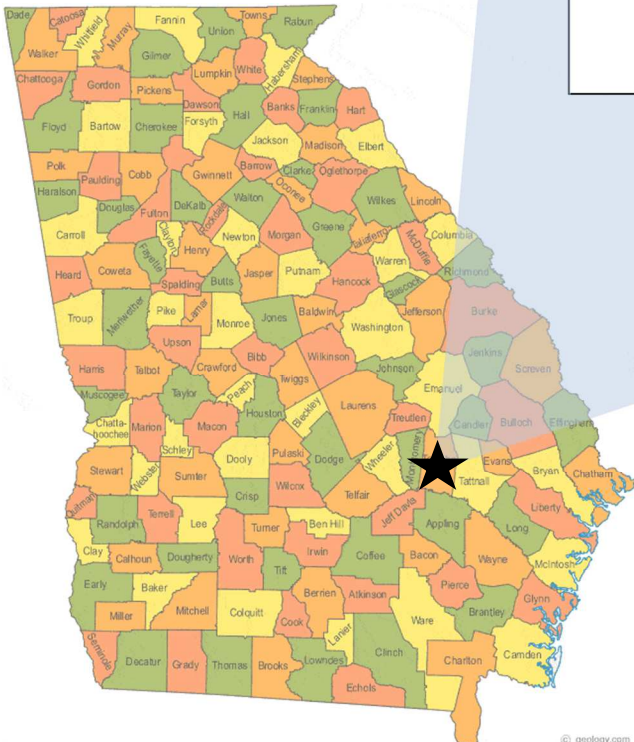
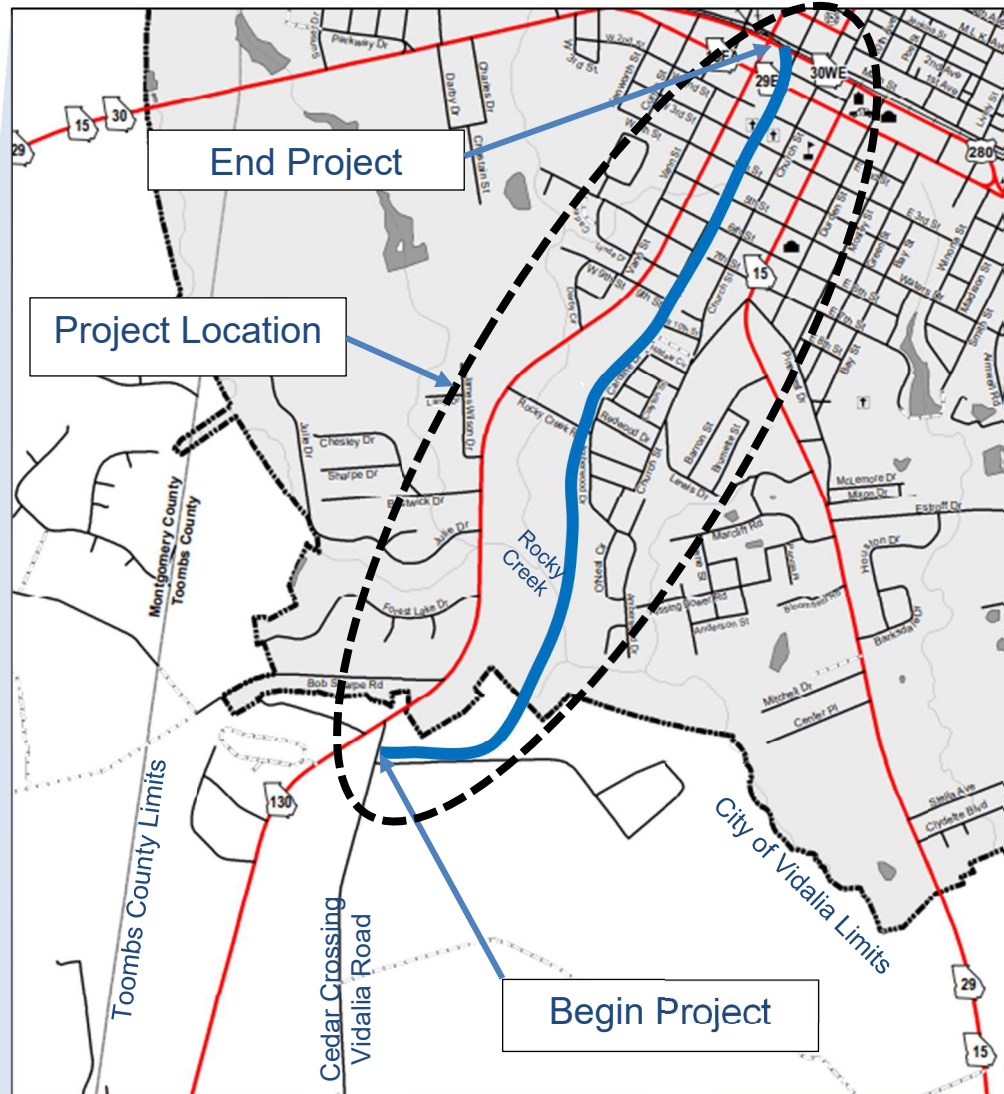


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Executive Summary

The purpose of this enhancement project is to provide a bicycle and pedestrian facility within the existing right-of-way of the former Central of Georgia Railroad from Cedar Crossings Vidalia Road to downtown Vidalia in Toombs County. In September 1983, the Central of Georgia Railroad Company was issued a Certificate and Decision from the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon and discontinue service along the section of railroad located between the City of Vidalia and the community of Hester. In July 2004, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) acquired this section of railroad from Central of Georgia Railroad Company in the interest of preserving the railroad corridor for possible future use. Since that time, there has been no rail service along this section of the rail line. The rail structure will be removed by the proposed project to construct a bicycle and pedestrian facility. The right-of-way is owned by GDOT, and the proposed project will not require any right-of-way plans or certification.

Success Criteria and Phased Design

The success of the project will be based on the following criteria:

- Delivering a phased and constructible trail project where Phase 1 will be let by January 2024.
- Delivering Phase 2 plans to construction while Phase 1 is under construction

A two-phased design approach will be required to successfully let a portion of this project in January 2024. Phase 1 is anticipated to include the trail along the abandoned railroad from Cedar Crossing Vidalia Road to Main Street with exception areas as noted below which will be included in Phase 2. As the project develops through design, additional portions of the project may move into Phase 2.

Anticipated Phase 2:

- Pedestrian bridge over W 1st St and trail connection to Main St
- Pedestrian bridge or culvert between W 4th St and W 5th St
- Pedestrian bridge at Rocky Creek
- Trail portion impacting buffered stream near Bostwick Circle to Rocky Creek

Project Justification

The Vidalia Rail Trail advances the bicycle/pedestrian and trail priorities identified within the Toombs County Long Range Transportation Plan, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan, the Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study, and the Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan recommends a regional East-West State Bike Route along US 280/SR 30 in Toombs County, GA. The Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study recommends transportation improvements that can improve access to the Altamaha River including bike/pedestrian and multi-use trail linkages to the Altamaha River corridor resources like the state-owned Gray's Landing. The Toombs County Joint Comprehensive Plan recommends a bicycle trail/route designation along Cedar Crossing Vidalia Road from Vidalia to Gray's Landing along the Altamaha River. The Vidalia Rail Trail would provide a key bike/pedestrian and trail link between Cedar Crossing Vidalia Road and Downtown Vidalia including the proposed future regional East-West State Bike Route along US 280/SR 30 and advance the goals of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region to have a well-connected trail network connecting cultural centers including Downtown Vidalia to the region's most significant natural resource, the Altamaha River.

Project Description

Existing Conditions: The trail alignment runs along an abandoned railroad line. The railroad track rails are still present along many segments of the alignment but have been removed or paved over in other areas over time. The track rails are approximately spaced at 5-ft 2-in along the railroad centerline and the wooden roadbed sleeper is approx. 9-ft in width. The clear length slope to slope of the ballast is approx. 14-ft wide. The railroad is typically centered within the existing right-of-way with some exceptions along the corridor.

Proposed Project: A 10-ft wide trail is proposed from Cedar Crossing Vidalia Road to downtown Vidalia ending at Main St/US 280/SR 15/SR 29/SR 30 in Toombs County, GA. Where the trail is directly adjacent to a wall, barrier or fence, the trail will be widened by one-foot, resulting in a 12-ft wide trail where walls, barriers or fences would be present on both sides. The trail is approximately 2.6 miles long. The trail will follow the existing abandoned railroad alignment and stay within the existing right-of-way. Grading and drainage improvements are anticipated along the trail within existing right-of-way. Pedestrian lighting will be provided at the at-grade crossing locations. Pedestrian bridges are anticipated at Rocky Creek, over W 1st St, and a possible third pedestrian bridge or culvert is anticipated at the stream crossing between W 4th St. and W 5th St. Fiber conduit for future camera connection will run along the alignment. Landscape buffers to minimize impacts to adjacent property owners and site furnishing improvements at select locations along the trail corridor are anticipated.

Existing Major Structures: Headwalls and large pipes in poor condition are located near Rocky Creek. Major structures at Rocky Creek crossing and between the 4th St and 5th St stream crossing have been removed or washed away. No other major structures are located along the existing rail alignment. Multiple smaller cross drains were observed and the existing railbed remains at most locations along the rail line.

Proposed Major Structures: The following major structures are proposed:

- Pedestrian bridge over W 1st St
- Pedestrian bridge or culvert between W 4th St and W 5th St
- Pedestrian bridge at Rocky Creek

Currently, no special design walls are anticipated. GDOT standard walls may be required to keep portions of the trail within existing right-of-way.

Trail Design:

The typical section and design features are proposed below. In constrained areas, deviations may be necessary to stay within existing right-of-way, as noted.

Feature	Standard	Proposed
Trail Width	10- ft	10-ft*
Outside Shoulder	2-ft	2-ft**
Design Speed	18 mph	18 mph
Maximum Grade	5%	5%***
Pavement Type		Concrete

* An 8-ft width may be utilized in constrained sections, where practical an additional one-foot width would be added to each side of the trail adjacent to a wall, barrier, or fence

** A 1 -ft width may be utilized in constrained section

*** A max of 8.3% for no greater than 200-ft or 10% for up to 30-ft may be utilized in areas where the trail needs to be brought to grade (at-grade crossing locations) and would be provided with a resting interval.

Intersection Crossings: Cedar Crossing Vidalia Rd (Project Begin), Cherrywood Dr, Rocky Creek Rd, W 6th St, W 4th St, W 3rd St, W 1st St, Main St (Project End)

Existing Right-of-Way Width: Approx. 60 ft.

Anticipated Required Right-of-Way: None

The project is expected to be built entirely within existing GDOT right-of-way. However, if a need for right-of-way is identified as design progresses, that segment of the project will be moved to Phase 2.

Project Coordination

Lighting and Maintenance: Yes

Lighting is proposed at the at-grade crossings only. Landscape buffers are anticipated, where needed, to minimize impacts to adjacent property owners. GDOT will pursue a lighting and maintenance agreement with locals.

Variances and Deviations: There are currently no design variance or deviations anticipated. However, as design progresses, variances or deviations for the following elements may be required and will be coordinated with the Office of Design Policy and Support, as needed:

- Trail Width
- Shoulder Width
- Drainage Improvements
- Lateral Offset

Railroad Involvement: Coordination with GDOT Office of Intermodal anticipated

Utilities: Atlanta Gas Light, AT&T, Alma Telephone Co, Altamaha EMC, Georgia Power (Distribution), City of Vidalia (Water), City of Vidalia (Sewer)

- Proposed Pedestrian Bridge at W 1st Street will impact overhead power and transmission lines. It is anticipated that these lines will need to be buried. The pedestrian bridge is included in Phase 2.
- A sewer line runs parallel to Rocky Creek but is not anticipated to be impacted by the project design.

Environmental

Anticipated Environmental Document: GEPA- No document

MS4 Compliance Required: No

Environmental Permits, Variances, Commitments, and Coordination anticipated: Environmental permits are not anticipated for Phase 1 of the project. If Phase 2 would result in impacts to waters and non-exempt impacts to state buffers, a USACE Section 404 Permit and an EPD Buffer Variance would be required.

NEPA/GEPA Comments & Information: Based on initial screening, eligible historic resources within the project area are two historic districts, two churches (one with a cemetery), a water tower, and two railroads. The project area also includes an NRHP-listed district. Additional historic resources were identified, though they are not expected to be considered eligible. Adverse impacts are not anticipated. The eligibility recommendations and effects will need to be coordinated with the Office of Environmental Services.

Waters of the US and state buffers are present in the project vicinity, though no impacts to these resources are anticipated in Phase 1 of the project. Phase 2 would be developed to avoid and minimize impacts to waters and state buffers if possible. Suitable habitat for aquatic species may be present in the project area, and the potential for suitable habitat for protected plant species is low. Special provisions may be required.

A Public Information Open House is not anticipated.

Risks

The following elements and areas have been identified from a high-level assessment as concerns or risks that could delay efficient delivery of the project administered by GDOT via the Plan Development Process (PDP) along with recommended mitigation options. The current schedule does not reflect the need for a right-of-way phase; the discussion below highlights risks that would further delay delivery.

Public Controversy: Since the project is entirely within GDOT right-of-way, no public involvement or stakeholder meetings are required or anticipated. However, given the proximity of the proposed trail to residences, public concern may arise. Public coordination could potentially result in cost escalation to mitigate concerns and cause schedule delay. GDOT will coordinate with locals with any raised citizen concerns and determine best path to mitigate without delaying the schedule. There is also indication of grassroots support for this trail from organizations such as the Georgia & Florida Trail, Inc. who is a non-profit organization whose mission is the conversion of abandoned railroad corridors into facilities for non-motorized recreation. One of their stated priorities is the Sweet Onion Rail Trail from Downtown Vidalia to Downtown Hazlehurst which contains the limits covered by the proposed project.

Right-of-Way Concerns: There are multiple constrained locations along the corridor where existing right-of-way will be tight and a reduced trail width with walls may be required to stay within existing right-of-way. As mitigation, elements that cannot be constructed within existing right-of-way or would require additional coordination, such as a WFI/BFI, will be moved to Phase 2.

- W 6th Street and Arnau St: Conflicts with existing parking lot
 - Railroad is not centered in the right-of-way and the western track rail has been removed or paved over but ran parallel along the existing parking lot edge. The alignment of the trail would need to shift off the railroad alignment and utilize the existing right-of-way between the parking lot and roadway. A reduced trail width may be required to construct within existing right-of-way due to concerns with stormwater drainage and the adjacent roadway.
- W 4th St: Raised railbed not flush with street crossing
 - Would likely require walls to make an at-grade crossing. Reduced trail width may be required so that construction of walls can remain within existing right-of-way.
- W 3rd St: Raised railbed not flush with street crossing
 - Would likely require walls to make an at-grade crossing. Reduced trail width may be required so that construction of walls can remain within existing right-of-way.

- Between W 3rd St and E 2nd St:
 - Railroad runs narrowly behind existing structure. Reduced trail width may be required to construct within existing right-of-way.
- W 1st Street: Raised railbed not flush with street crossing
 - Pedestrian bridge is currently proposed over W 1st St. Reduced trail width may be required to construct within existing right-of-way. Required vertical clearance over W 1st St would require existing aerial to be relocated. WFI/BFI will be required.

Permitting Concerns: Due to the delays associated with permitting, hydraulic studies, and/or additional geotechnical studies, these areas are recommended for Phase 2 as part of the risk mitigation strategy.

- Rocky Creek Crossing
 - The existing structure connecting the railroad no longer exists, erosion and scour near remaining walls was observed, and the existing pipes that remain are in poor condition. A full design and replacement is anticipated at this location including a pedestrian bridge which will require a WFI/BFI. Rocky Creek is considered Flood Zone AE and replacement will require hydraulics report and permitting.
- Stream Crossing between 4th St and 5th St
 - There is no existing structure over the stream crossing at this location and portions of the rail track are currently suspended in air. Design of a pedestrian bridge or culvert is anticipated in this area and may require a WFI/BFI. Permitting for the stream is likely to be required.
- Trail portion impacting buffered stream near Bostwick Circle to Rocky Creek.
 - A stream runs parallel to the trail, crosses to a pipe under the trail that outfalls to a detention pond. Scour was noted at the outlet of the cross drain which connects to an undersized pipe that may be outside of existing right-of-way. Drainage analysis would need to confirm ditch and outfall sizing. Permitting for stream buffer impacts is anticipated.

Other Concerns: Multiple driveways cross the existing railroad alignment. There are several locations where property owners have built over or on top of the existing railroad including elements that would need to be removed as part of the trail design. Driveway connections will be provided as part of the trail design and completed within existing right-of-way.

Connection to the Stage at City Park without Multi-Use Trail: With the limited existing right-of-way and possible utility and building impacts, the project does not include a multi-use trail connection to the park. However, the following options provide sidewalk connection:

- Option 1: E/W 1st Street- Existing 5-foot sidewalks connect to the park with several signalized intersections which can be utilized for crossing 1st St. Existing buildings and utilities are challenges for widening out to multi-use trail width.
- Option 2: SW Main Street- existing 5-foot sidewalks that wrap to buildings and parking lot. Buildings, parking lot, and limited right-of-way are challenges for widening to multi-use trail width.

Summary Milestone Schedule

The proposed schedule and milestones for Phase I below are based on a projected let date of 01/19/24. Adjustments have been made to the schedule based on conversations with the Office of Program Delivery.

Project Milestone	Target Date
Hold FFPR	8/4/23
Submit Corrected FFPR Plans	9/15/23
Environmental Certification	11/3/23
Submit Final Plans to CBA	11/10/23
Letting	01/19/24

Below is a summary of how to advance the milestones to make the January 2024 letting.

Survey

Since the design will take place in existing right-of-way, the site will be surveyed up to the existing right-of-way to deliver topographical information as soon as possible to begin the preliminary layout.

Environmental Document

The environmental survey boundary (ESB) will follow the limits of the existing right of way.

- Combined ERS-AOER (The exception areas will push all USAE coordination to Phase II)
- Expedite field studies

Concept

This Project Charter will be used in lieu of a concept report and concept team meeting.

Preliminary and Final Design Combined

To expedite the delivery of the project, a single field plan review for the project will be held and preliminary and final design will be combined. Trail design will move forward with available data prior to receiving the approved survey. Utility coordination will include a combined 1st and 2nd utility plan submittal for distribution based on a conceptual alignment. Major utility impacts are not anticipated since all work will be completed within existing right-of-way of the former railroad except for the Phase 2 pedestrian bridge over W 1st St.

During the design process the following additional options and PDP exceptions may we required to advance this project quickly to let:

- Deviation from standard environmental submittals and review commitments;
- One Field Plan Review for the project
- Decreased review time and approval for the Phase I OMAT submission;
- Expedited review of design variances and exceptions, if needed;
- Waivers as needed to move forward with Field Plan Review.

Potential issues that might delay project delivery:

Issue	Proposed Mitigation
Traffic studies and analysis	Coordinate with GDOT TMC to confirm requirements for Shared-Use crossings and add traffic data as needed
Design Variances/Exceptions	Coordinate early with GDOT Design Policy and Support to understand design constraints and what might be required to validate approvals
Environmental Permits	Move any portion of the project that would trigger a permit into Phase 2

Summary Budget

The following table contains a summary budget based on the planned scope and costs required for the successful completion of the entire project.

Phase	Cost
PE Cost	\$ 2.2M
ROW Cost	\$1M*
Utility Cost	\$675K
Construction Cost	\$9.1M
Environmental Mitigation Cost	TBD**
Total Cost	\$13.0 M


* \$0.00 for Phase 1. Any right-of-way needed would be included in Phase 2.

**\$0.00 for Phase 1. Mitigation estimates for Phase 2 would be provided after fieldwork to determine resource locations and after preliminary coordination with design to determine if impacts can be avoided

Project Approval Requirements

Changes to the project's scope, schedule and/or budget will require the approval of the Office of Program Delivery.

Approvals

Submitted By:  Date: 2/15/2023
Sarah Blackburn, Gresham Smith

Approved By: _____ Date: 3/24/23
Albert V. Shelby, III, GDOT Director of Program Delivery

Preconstruction Status Report

PI NUMBER:	0019218	VIDALIA RAIL TRAIL FM DOWNTOWN VIDALIA TO CEDAR CROSSING RD									
COUNTY:	Toombs	SPONSOR:	GDOT	MEASURE:	E	BASELINE LET DT:	1/11/24	MGMT LET DT:	1/15/24	PRINT DATE:	03/16/23
LENGTH(MI):	2.50	MPO:	Not Urban	DESIGN FIRM:	Atkins North America, Inc.	SCHED LET DT:	1/10/25	MGMT ROW DT:		PAGE:	1
PROJ NO:		TIP#:		PRIORITY CD:		LIGHTING TYP:	None	WHO LETS?:	Prepare Plans for Shelf		
PROJ MGR:	Edwards, Cassius	MODEL YR:		DOT DIST:	5	ENV DOC TYPE:	GEPA	LET WITH:	0		
	Octavius			CONG. DIST:	012	ENV CONSULTANT:	ATKINS				
AOHD INITIALS:	CLB	TYPE WORK:	Bicycle/Ped. Facility	COMPLETE STREETS:							
OFFICE:	Program Delivery	CONCEPT:	BIKE/PED	SUFF:							
CONSULTANT:	Consultant Design (contract with GDOT)	PROG TYPE:	Enhancement								

BASE START	BASE FINISH	TASKS	START DATE	FINISH DATE	ACTUAL START	ACTUAL FINISH	%
3/21/22	6/7/22	Database Summary	1/30/23	5/30/23	1/30/23		15
3/21/22	1/3/23	Environmental Activity LOE (11412 through 18100)	2/1/23	1/18/24	2/1/23		0
3/21/22	9/15/22	Environmental Resource Identification Summary	2/1/23	9/26/23	2/1/23		7
6/8/22	9/26/22	Preliminary Roadway Plans LOE (Designer Activities)	5/31/23	10/25/23			0
1/4/23	5/18/23	Final Roadway Plans LOE (Designer Activities)	1/19/24	5/30/24			0
7/3/23	7/3/23	FFPR Inspection	7/12/24	7/12/24			0
10/27/23	10/27/23	Submit Final Plans	11/4/24	11/4/24			0

Design :	Atkins Global, Vincent Reynolds, (W) 678.247.5451, (C) 678.429.2468, Vincent.Reynolds@atkinsglobal.com, Sarah Blackburn, Gresham Smith, (W) 678.518.3930, (C) 513.265.3521, sarah.blackburn@greshamsmith.com, Regional Master Contract 48400-265-TOOPD2101612 (Exp. 6/30/24), TO # 42 for charter, survey database, prelim. plans & Env. doc. (Exp. 6/30/24), TO # 44 PXP (Exp. 12/29/23).
EIS :	On Sched. MGMT Jan24 Let Will Cert by BL 30Oct23 SF-No Doc Christian/J.Brown 14Mar23
Office Heads :	Aug. 2022 - Senator Tillery engaged. AVS
ROW :	ASU:Per PM NO ROW FJW 6-3-22
Utility :	At Risk; Need concept 10/3/2022; Requested 1st subs from PM 3/14/2023; Preliminary Cost Estimate to PM 2/6/2023

Phase	Approved	Proposed	Lump Yr	Program	Cost	Fund	Status	Date Auth
PE	2023	2023			\$1,000,000.00	Y600	AUTHORIZED	8/25/22
CST	2024	2028			\$4,000,000.00	Y600	PREST	

COST EST AMTS			STIP AMOUNTS		
PE	\$1,000,000.00		Activity	Cost	Fund
CST	\$4,000,000.00		PE	\$0.00	Y600
			CST	\$0.00	Y600

Project Manager
Scope: Rails to Trails f/dwntwn Vidalia to Cedar Crossings Rd in Toombs Co. f/ pedes./bicycle use.
Schedule: SRC approved schedule waiting on Commissioner approval.
Design: Charter in OPD review, preliminary design ongoing.
ROW: N/R
OMAT: N/A
Risk: N/A
Budget: N/A
COE 3/1/23

Pre Parcel CT Under Review Released	Total Parcel in ROW System: Options Pending: Condemnations – Pend:	Cond Field: Relocations: Acquired:	Acquired by: Acquisition MGR: ROW Cert Date:	N/R	DEEDS CT:
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