



Agenda
City of Clarkesville
Council Work Session
5:00 PM November 10,
2025

1. *Call to Order*
2. *Unfinished Business*
 - 2a. *Update on Georgia DOT Round-a-bout*
 - 2b. *Council Member Coppedge Will Update on the Soque River Watershed Association*
3. *New Business*
 - 3a. *Discuss the Georgia Municipal Association Lease Program*
4. *Open Discussion*
5. *Public Comment*
6. *Consider Going Into Executive Session*
7. *Adjournment*



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 631-1990 Main Office

October 20, 2025

Sent via E-mail & U.S. Mail

Mr. Keith Dickerson
City Manager, City of Clarkesville
P. O. Box 21,
Clarkesville, GA 30523.

**RE: GDOT Project: P I No: 0013882; City of Clarkesville; Habersham County
SR 197 @ SR 385 in Clarkesville – Roundabout Construction
Utility-Aid Request Approval.**

Dear Mr. Dickerson,

This letter is in response to your request for the Department to consider assisting the City of Clarkesville with funding for the utility's relocation on the above-referenced project, which is currently scheduled for the **January 2026 letting**.

Based upon review of the Utility-Aid package and plans you submitted to the State Utilities Office, the **Department will assume 60% of the (in-kind) construction relocation costs** of the utility facilities in conflict with the proposed project, excluding betterment, currently estimated at **\$ 438,526.00. The City will be responsible for 40% of the (in-kind) construction relocation costs** of the utility facilities in conflict with the proposed project, currently estimated at **\$ 292,350.66**. The current total estimated construction relocation (in-kind) cost is approximately **\$ 730,876.66 and no betterment. The City** will be responsible for 100% of the preliminary engineering cost associated with relocation design of the subject facilities.

The maximum contribution from the City is limited to \$ 292,350.66. The following payment installment schedule is agreed between the City of Clarkesville and GDOT. **Installment 1: 50% (\$ 146,175.33) - Due in February 2026 and Installment 2: 50% (\$ 146,175.33) - Due in February 2027.**

The following general requirements shall apply to this aid:

1. The City will routinely budget for potential relocation liabilities for permitted facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department. The City may be asked to provide verification that this responsibility is met prior to the approval of permits.
2. All relocation work required for this project shall be included in the Department's project contract. Therefore, the City will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Contract Item Agreement (CIA) with the Department to perform the utility relocation required for this project. In this MOU, the City will agree that construction engineering and contract supervision shall be the responsibility of the Department, and the Department shall be responsible to assure that all utility work is accomplished in accordance with the plans and specifications and to consult with the City before authorizing any changes or deviations which affect the City's facilities.

Mr. Keith Dickerson, City Manager, City of Clarkesville; Habersham County
GDOT Project P.I. No. 0013882; SR 197 @ SR 385 in Clarkesville - Roundabout Construction
Utility-Aid Request Approval
October 20, 2025
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The City must coordinate with the Department's District Utilities Office so that arrangements are made to ensure that relocation plans are prepared to meet the Department's schedule and plan standards.

3. The City must complete preliminary engineering at its own expense. The City shall ensure that engineering for this work is performed according to current Department Standards. The City must coordinate with the Department's District Utilities Office, so that arrangements are made to ensure that the engineering is completed and approved without delay to the project schedule.
4. The Department cannot bear the cost of any "betterment" items. If betterment is included in the Department's plans, the Department will only pay up to the approved estimated amount for Utility-Aid. The City will be responsible for any additional cost resulting from "betterment" items.

Please make completion of preliminary engineering an urgent matter and continue coordination with the District Utilities Office to finalize arrangements. All such correspondence should be sent to the following address:

Ms. Terri Holbrook
District 1 Utilities Manager
Georgia Department of Transportation
1475 Jesse Jewell Pkwy NE, Suite 100
Gainesville, GA 30501

If you have any questions or need any additional information on this matter, please contact me at 404-631-1380.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by
Nicholas
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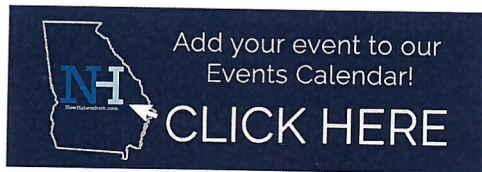
Nicholas Fields
State Utilities Administrator

NF: SPJ

cc: Emily Dunn, Board Member
Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
Andrew Heath, P.E., Deputy Commissioner
Meg Pirkle, P.E., Chief Engineer
Alan Davis, P.E., Director of Permits and Operations
Angie Robinson, Financial Management Administrator
William Wright Jr., Local Grants Administrator
Jason Dykes, P.E., District 1 Engineer
Justin Lott, District 1 Preconstruction Engineer
Terri Holbrook, District 1 Utilities Manager
Susan Pacheco, Project Manager

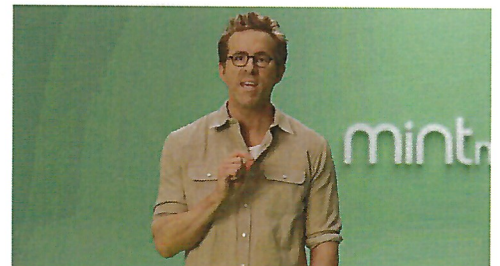
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Soque Greenway Trail: new name, new plan, new phase in Clarkesville

By **Nora Almazan** - July 28, 2024 | Updated: July 28, 2024





The Heroes Project at Lowes is a program where employees donate their time to community projects. These Lowes volunteers are assisting with improvements to the newly renamed Soque Greenway Trail. (photo Brad Coppedge/ SRWA)

It has a new name and a new plan, and as they finish Phase I of the project and begin Phase II, the Clarkesville Nature Trail is set to become something community members and visitors will want to experience and enjoy.



The Soque Greenway Trail, formerly known as "The Greenway", is under the management of the Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA) in partnership with the City of Clarkesville as of May 2024. This 19-acre plot has nearly one mile of walking trail (4,332 feet) with a loop trail of 2,580 feet or 1/2 mile.

Nature-based trail

The uniqueness of the trail is where it is located. Next to Clarkesville Mills and The Village, the trail is inviting and rustic, bordered by the beautiful Soque River. It starts at Grant Street just before one turns into the Mill.



Lowe's has been a major contributor to the Soque Greenway Trail project. (Brad Coppedge/SRWA)

"The whole genesis of the project was to create the first nature-based trail in the area," says City Councilman Brad Coppedge, President of the SRWA.



"When we were asked to take over the care and management of the trail, the Board at SRWA felt it was the right thing to do since we helped start it initially in 2004."

In Phase I of the project, the SRWA, along with the help of Lowes and countless volunteers, has rebuilt the bridge over Rocky Branch Creek to connect Mary Street where the Pickle Ball Courts, soccer field, and pavilion are. They cut back the foliage which helps to make the trail feel safer and look better. The benches have been replaced with metal ones and new signage has been added.

Heroes project

Jeremy Gattis, manager of Lowes, and many employees have dedicated their time and talents to help remodel the trail. Employees donate their time to projects such as this one through a program called "The Heroes Project."

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"Our CEO has a passion for us to be involved in the community. Lowes will pay our associates 8 hours to go volunteer at their local charity of choice once a year," Gattis explains.

With 168 employees, Lowes in Cornelia has the potential to make a "huge impact in our communities," he says.



"Working with Jeremy and all at Lowes has been wonderful," says Coppedge. "They've donated lumber, paint, doggy trashcans, plants, and trees. They've also donated their time and energy. We couldn't have done it without them."

Coppedge explains as the project moves forward, SRWA will create with the city of Clarkesville and others a concise plan that follows the vision of the original founding group.

The desire is to maintain the area as a nature-based trail with expansions to include trail extensions that would reach the Ingles parking lot in Clarkesville and Sam Pitts Park.

"We have a lot of work ahead of us. The most important being to make sure everyone understands what the trail is about, that it is owned by the city, and that it is for everyone to enjoy," Coppedge adds.

Renaming ceremony



A nature-based trail in the heart of Clarkesville brings enjoyment for the community and welcomes visitors. (photo Brad Coppedge/SRWA)

On October 12, the city of Clarkesville plans to have a ceremony to honor the renaming of the trail for all of the community. Keith Dickerson, City Manager for Clarkesville, is heading up the celebration.

"There will be a 5k run in the morning, a creole boil soup over rice, a classic rock concert, food trucks, beverage trucks, and ice cream trucks," Coppedge de
"We plan to also have the annual plant and tree sale that day as well."

The bridge which was rebuilt over Rocky Branch Creek will be named "Lowes Hero Bridge" in honor of the contribution of the team from Lowes.

"I find it very rewarding to be a part of a company that values and encourages community service," says Gattis. "I'm fortunate to have a team that shares this passion and looks forward to being involved with our projects by donating their time and expertise. We are already looking for our next project."

Unique experience

It is an extraordinary time for the people of this community to be a part of something that hasn't been done before in this area.

The trail will allow residents and visitors to experience the beauty of nature in the heart of the community. There are grant opportunities as well, which several members of the county are diligently working to obtain.

The Soque River is the primary geographic feature in the city of Clarkesville, which borders the north end of the Soque Greenway Trail. Coppedge talks about being on the trail and seeing people – people walking dogs, pushing strollers, running, looking at nature, and simply being together.

Coppedge says, "It was exciting to see because that is what it is all about. ^(x) The trail is beautiful and unique and maintaining it keeps the river safe and clean too. together."

CITY OF CLARKESVILLE PROJECTS	
Public Safety <i>including, but not limited to, all necessary engineering, construction, materials, vehicles, and equipment.</i>	\$1,450,000
Water and Sewer Infrastructure <i>including, but not limited to, all necessary engineering, construction, materials, vehicles, and equipment.</i>	\$300,000
Roads and Bridges <i>including, but not limited to, the repair, repaving, and restriping of city roads and bridges, and all necessary engineering, construction, materials, and equipment.</i>	\$371,467
Improvements to Park <i>including, but not limited to, all necessary engineering, construction, materials, and equipment.</i>	\$200,000
Total Clarkesville Projects	\$2,321,467

Equipment & Real Estate Financing Programs

Direct Lease Types and Leasing Periods

GMA's direct lease program offers leasing terms for various municipal equipment, including police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, school buses, and more, with periods ranging from 60 to 120 months depending on the vehicle or system type.

Types	Leasing Period
Police Cars	72 Months
Staff Vehicles	72 Months
Pickup Trucks	72 Months
School Buses	84 Months
Fire Trucks	120 Months
Bulldozers	72 Months
Motor Graders	72 Months
Ambulances	84 Months

Types	Leasing Period
Paving Equipment	72 Months
Dump Trucks	72 Months
Garbage Trucks	84 Months
Street Sweepers	60 Months
Modular Buildings	60 Months
Street Lighting and Traffic Control Equipment	60 Months
Telecommunication Systems, 911 Systems, Voice or Voice-Data Systems	60 Months
Computer Systems (software and other soft costs not to exceed 20%)	60 Months

Need more information or have a question? Reach out today.

For security reasons, please do not include sensitive information such as passwords, dates of birth, account numbers, Social Security numbers, or medical/health details.

Service Contacts

Philip Potter

(678) 686-6274