Clayton County Greenway Vision
| **Project Name:** | Clayton County Greenway Vision |
| **Location:** | Clayton County, GA |
| **Description:** | The proposed greenway will run through portions of Clayton County, connecting neighborhoods and providing recreational opportunities for the community. The trail system will have multiple access points, contain educational stations, and provide necessary facilities to users. |
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| **Date of Initial Site Visit:** | 1.21.2009 |
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| **Final Products:** | This report contains suggestions for proposed road crossings, access points, and educational stations. These recommendations are illustrated in perspective sketches and plan drawings. |
| **Date Delivered:** | 5.22.2009 |
Future Trail System Map
Figure 5.9
2008 Comprehensive Master Plan
Clayton County, Georgia

Legend
- Section 1
- Section 2
- Section 3
- Section 4
- Section 5
- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trails Location
- Senior Center
- Recreation Center
- County Park

Context
Clayton County is currently in the process of acquiring tracts of land that will accommodate the proposed future trail system. The first phase to be implemented will be located along the Flint River and provide greenway access to adjacent neighborhoods and alternative crossings at several major roadways. This report will identify some issues that will need to be addressed in the design of the greenway trails and provide images to aid in visualizing potential design alternatives for trailheads, roadways crossings, as well as recreation and educational stations.

Goal for the Trails System Master Plan:

“Develop a destination driven system of trails throughout the County that not only provides for alternative transportation, but affords a safe environment for our citizens to recreate, relax and learn about our natural environment.”
Pipelines
Pipes for gas and other city utilities surface at several major intersections, making greenway construction difficult and compromising the aesthetics of the trail system. Pipelines should be buried where they cross the greenway.

Road Crossings
The proposed greenway crosses several major roadways as well as some minor streets. These intersections must be addressed to maximize pedestrian safety.

Sidewalks
Sidewalks are non-existent or narrow and in disrepair along much of the proposed greenway, compromising the safety of users accessing the future trails.

Signage
Existing signage is small and only legible when on foot. Signage should be addressed to better demarcate the trail system.
The greenway should be a uniform entity from start to finish. The design of entryways, amenities, rest areas, signage, and all other components should derive from a master aesthetic specified in the design development stage of planning. The following recommendations will help make the greenway a cohesive whole and improve the safety and enhance the experience of the users.

**Sidewalks**

Wider sidewalks (6 or more feet wide) should be installed along roadways leading to entry points on the greenway with as much space as possible between the pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Where feasible, plantings should be installed to further separate the sidewalk from the roadway to create a better experience for pedestrians.

**Plants**

A palette of plants should be selected to be used throughout the greenway that will be deer resistant, low-maintenance, and be able to withstand seasonal flooding and drought. The plants should also be non-invasive and appropriate for the riparian habitats they will occupy. A suggested list of plants is included at the end of this report.

**Bollards**

Removable bollards (either manually removable or mechanical bollards that sink into the ground) should be placed at entrances to the greenway to discourage vehicular traffic on the trails. The bollards must be removable for fire and maintenance access.
Signage has the ability to create place recognition and identity as well as orienting users and imparting information about the greenway. The signage selected for the Clayton County Greenway should be distinctive, simple, and easily legible. Three types of signs are needed throughout the trail system: entryway signs at trailheads and major intersections, wayfinding signs along the trails, and signs specific to each educational station.

**Entryway Signs**

These signs let users know they have reached the greenway and should be placed at the entrances to parking lots and other access points. When located at points where the greenway crosses major roadways, the signs alert drivers to slow for pedestrians and serve as advertisement for potential future users.

**Wayfinding Signs**

Maps of the greenway with marked distances and point of interest placed along the trail can help orient users and aid in selecting routes. Distance markers along the trail at quarter or half mile increments are also useful to users.

**Educational Signs**

Education oriented signs attract visitors’ attention and allow them to explore various topics such as culture, history and the environment. Unique and interactive signs are more effective for educational purposes than traditional signage.
Entries to the greenway that provide public parking should blend as seamlessly as possible into the surrounding neighborhoods. Care should be taken to preserve existing trees and deciduous street trees should be planted to screen the parking lot from adjacent houses.

Parking lots should be marked with entryway signage and the trailhead should have a wayfinding map to orient users. These entry points can also house restroom and picnic facilities. Trail end points should also be equipped with bike racks and water fountains.

Neighborhood access points can be simple yet effective with appropriate signage or entry posts.
Street crossings are vital to the integrity of the greenway system and should be designed to maximize pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular safety. Minor roadways can be crossed safely at grade with the use of a slightly raised crosswalk (2-3 inches). The raised, textured crossing acts as a speed bump and visually indicates to automobile drivers the need for them to slow down and proceed with caution.

Additional traffic lights can be added for improved compliance with pedestrian right-of-way regulations.

Bollards in the middle of the trail on either side of the roadway prohibit unauthorized vehicles from gaining entry to the greenway.

Slight curves in the trail before each road crossing will help to slow cyclists crossing the roadway, and stop signs for trail users raise awareness of the vehicular traffic.

Maintaining the tree line at a setback of 15-20 feet back from the road, visibility is improved for both drivers and greenway patrons.
At major road crossings (four lanes or more) the greenway must cross either over or under the roadway. Our recommendation is that the greenway continues underneath the existing bridges where possible.

This will not only provide a safer and more calming crossing for trail users, but will also help to maintain an unimpeded flow of traffic on the roadway.

Wider sidewalks should be installed on these bridges that will allow for safe pedestrian access to and from the greenway at these points, and entryway signs should denote the presence of the trail as it passes under the roadway.

Where it is not possible for pedestrians to cross under existing bridges we recommend some amendments to the existing street in order to help calm traffic and increase driver awareness of pedestrians crossing.

As shown in the example to the right, simple changes include changing the paving material or painting the asphalt at the crossing. Also adding a small median can help pedestrians cross more safely when traffic is busy.
Small space with amphitheatre style seating to accommodate groups (6" rise per level)

Low seat walls along trails accommodate individuals and smaller groups using the trail

Low wall edging amphitheatre (2.5 ft height)

Flat hardscape area

Pond with fish/ amphibians (minimum 3 ft depth to maintain water temperature)

Education opportunities on boards

Education Station
The education station features both interpretive signage, places for groups/individuals to gather as well as landscaping that helps the user to identify that they have reached a significant portion of the trail.

The plant combinations incorporated into the education station are meant to provide visual and textural interest for the viewer. Cultivars used provide both color and seasonal interest.

Recommended plants are deer resistant, tolerate some drought and require low maintenance.

Signage can be tailored to reflect the theme of a particular section of the trail where the station is located. E.g. History or wildlife signage.
Picnic Pavilion
Garden Benches
Restrooms
Pedestrian bridge over retention pond/stream
4’ wide pea gravel trails

Option 1 – Smaller recreation space
Option 2 – Larger recreation space

- Picnic Pavilion
- Restrooms
- Garden Benches
- Pedestrian bridge over retention pond/stream
- 4’ wide pea gravel trails
Recreation stations feature public restrooms, picnic pavilions and benches along the trail edge in close proximity to each other. The station offers opportunities for both larger and small groups to gather.

An added shallow pond is ideal for providing children with opportunities to interact with small wildlife such as fish/amphibians. The pond must be at least three feet deep to maintain a stable temperature for plant and animal life.

Pavilions are located away from the main trail to provide for some privacy but are grouped together and liked by additional pea gravel trails for easy accessibility and safety.
Steps down to pea gravel trail

Overhead trellis with in built swings

Large partially enclosed pavilion with bathrooms

Seat walls

Hardscape courtyard

Steps down to pea gravel trail

Rest and Education Station

Picnic Pavilion

Water feature
Combination stations include opportunities for both education and recreational activities and should be located at nodes or intersections along the trail.

Concentrating activities around intersections makes wayfinding easier and creates opportunities for spontaneous interaction among greenway visitors. Pavilions should be positioned close to the trail but screened with additional vegetation for some privacy. Pavilions are also connected via pea gravel paths away from the main trail providing greater accessibility.

Open air, hardscape area centered around educational signage is ideal for large groups. The space can be function both as an outdoor classroom or a recreational area.
Pavilions
Large, covered pavilions are ideal for picnics and group gatherings along the trail. Cast concrete flooring as a base is recommended for ADA accessibility and restrooms should be located in close proximity to picnic shelters.

Ponds
Naturalized ponds provide opportunities to incorporate wildlife and for users to interact with water. Stone edging will help to stabilize banks and allow safer pedestrian access.

Seating
Benches along the trail provide opportunities for rest and relaxation. Picnic tables provide gathering spaces with scenic overlooks.

Pedestrian Bridges
Small pedestrian bridges add to the natural aesthetic of the greenway and provide a safe way for users to cross over water features.
**Suggested Plant Palette**

**Trees**
- Cotinus x 'Grace' - Smokebush
- Betula nigra - River Birch
- Celtis laevigata - Sugar Hackberry

**Shrubs**
- Buxus sempervirens
- Berberis thunbergii 'Aurea Nana' and 'SunJoy(TM) Gold Pillar'
- Buddleia davidii 'Royal Red'
- Caryopteris divaricata 'Snow Fairy'

**Perennials**
- Athyrium niponicum var. pictum 'Ursula's Red'
- Agastache 'Cotton Candy' and 'Summer Fiesta' and 'Branford Beauty'
- Belamcanda chinensis 'Hello Yellow'

**Groundcovers**
- Ajuga reptans 'Black Scallop'
- Carex hachijoensis 'Evergold'
- Carex 'Island Brocade'
- Cerastium - Snow in Summer