

Hampton Greenway Master Plan



The Hampton Greenway

A Master Plan for Greenways & Trails in Hampton, Georgia

Prepared for:

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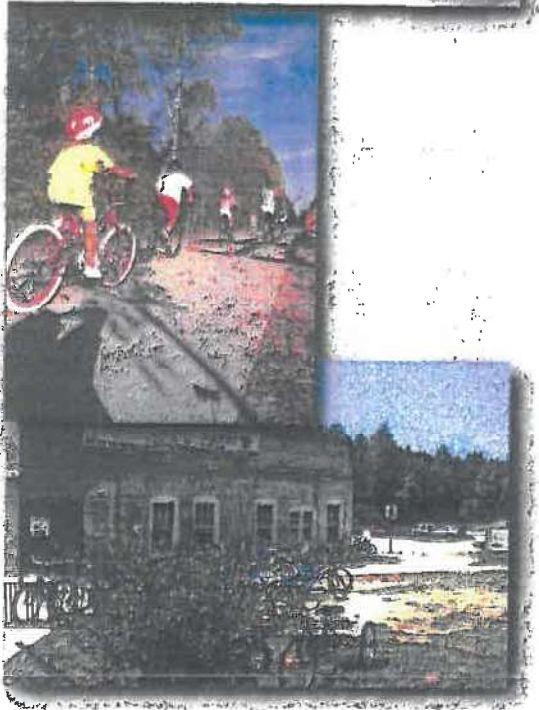


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INTRODUCTION

On a typical day in Hampton Georgia, mothers hop in their cars to take their children to school, businessmen drive to the Speedway to catch the new shuttle bus to Atlanta, and scores of healthy-minded citizens drive to McBrayer Park for a jog around the loop. Downtown shop owners get in their cars and drive to their shops, and SUV's full of children make their way to North Forty Park for the afternoon ballgame.

Imagine a different Hampton where school children safely walk or ride a bike to school, businessmen walk to the Atlanta shuttle bus, and hundreds of residents exercise throughout the City without ever getting into their cars. In the new Hampton, shop owners would not only walk to work, but their patrons would walk to their stores as well! Little league players and spectators could walk to the ballgame and leave the SUV's at home.

The proposed Hampton Greenway will connect the city with a network of shady linear parks and paved trails. These parks and trails will connect the commercial area on East Main Street to neighborhoods, schools, parks, and the Atlanta Motor Speedway with safe, fun places to ride, skate, and walk. The dependency on cars for local trips will wane. The Hampton greenway will become the transportation venue of choice for residents and visitors alike.

City leaders are poised to tackle the job of planning, designing, and building a network of greenways and trails in Hampton. This master plan, commissioned by the Hampton Downtown Development Authority, is the initial step toward implementing the development of 8.5 miles of connected trails and greenways. Hampton will be transformed into a true walkable city with a quality of life that other communities will envy.



BENEFITS OF GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

Connecting the residents of Hampton with a system of greenways and trails will dramatically enhance the lifestyle of its citizens in a positive way. Greenways and trails offer transportation alternatives, recreational choices, reserved parkland and more; they are social places where friends meet and stay healthy together. These trails will become valued elements of the infrastructure defining the community as a preferred address in the region.

INCREASED COMMERCE

Hampton is known as the home of Atlanta Motor Speedway. Hundreds of thousands of visitors come to the Speedway with few actually visiting Hampton. This will be even more evident when SR 20 is open and visitors to the Speedway can totally bypass the City.

The Hampton greenway will connect the weekend residents of the racetrack with new shops and eateries in downtown Hampton. The Speedway Trail will allow the racetrack visitors to enjoy the shops downtown and eat at Hampton restaurants without venturing into traffic and fighting for a parking place when they return. Downtown will transform into an assortment of classy shops, eateries, dessert parlors, and salons, just a short stroll from the mass gathering at the track.

The proposed Hampton Urban Bike Base (HUBB) will rent bikes to day-trippers from Atlanta and racing fans to tour the City and visit the countryside nearby. Concession business will boom at convenience stores near the trail as thirsty joggers and cyclists stop to relax. Clean commerce will follow the trail and tax revenues from local businesses will increase. Greenways and trails are economic generators, promoting ecotourism and a healthier economy for Hampton.

AN ENHANCED QUALITY OF LIFE

The Hampton Greenway will literally bring a park to everyone's doorstep. The greenways and trails proposed in this plan will change most everyone's daily routine to include morning walks with the dog, bike rides to school, and evening strolls to the ballpark.

Hampton will become healthier as exercising becomes part of everyday life with such a convenient facility nearby. "Neighboring" will take the form of jogging groups that meet daily, elderly citizens taking a stroll to town together, and kids learning to bike and skate without using the street. Families will recreate together and with other families thereby improving community cohesion. The Greenway will quickly become a treasured amenity that everyone will embrace.

REDUCED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Greenways and Trails help reduce criminal activity. A criminal's preferred venue is one where everyone stays in their home and no one interacts with police or each other. Trails beckon everyone outdoors to walk and talk together. Law enforcement agencies agree that communities where people are active and recreate outside together have less crime.

National studies and local experience support the notion that crime goes down when trails go in. Criminals are much more likely to arrive and leave by car than on foot. Criminals are also easier to spot on a trail than they are in a car.

Police officers on bicycles or on foot patrolling the trails will enhance safe use of the trails and promote community support for the police. Bicycle patrols have proven to be an effective way to police small communities, even without a greenway trail system in place. On trails, people are likely to engage officers and report suspicious activity much more quickly than if the officers are in cars. There are no studies supporting the notion that trails increase crime. There are numerous studies and local experience in the Atlanta area which indicate trails reduce crime.

LESS DEPENDENCY ON MOTORIZED TRAVEL

Hampton is small enough that most destinations are easily within walking and biking distance if safe facilities are in place. Developing the trail system will reduce the dependency on automobiles resulting in cleaner air, less traffic, and fewer fill-ups with gas.

Studies show that less than seventy percent of Americans drive. The remaining thirty percent are either too young, too old, or choose not to drive. The trail system will offer the non-driving public a safe and convenient way to travel around the city.

HIGHER PROPERTY VALUES

There are scores of studies from across the nation which conclude proximity to greenways and trails enhances property values. Neighbors to the Silver Comet Trail and Freedom Park Trail in Georgia have experienced a dramatic increase in their property values due in part to the development of the trails. New projects are connecting to these trails to provide seamless access and developers are charging more for their property in these projects as a result.

Nearby Peachtree City capitalized on the greenway trail idea decades ago. Much of the appreciation realized by property owners in Peachtree City can be directly attributed to the greenways and trails that weave through the city.

The Hampton Greenway will likely have a similar effect on property values in Hampton. New residents will want to buy homes with greenway access thereby increasing property values adjacent to the trails. Businesses near the trail will experience additional revenue as residents and visitors arrive by trail.





METHODOLOGY

An energetic group of volunteers has been the driving force behind planning greenways and trails in Hampton. These individuals sought help from the PATH Foundation to establish a trail system before new development engulfs the City. This master plan was developed by PATH in cooperation with the local volunteers and the City of Hampton. PATH and the City of Hampton wish to acknowledge the complete cooperation and extraordinary dedication received from these volunteers during the development of this plan.

PATH staff members met with various volunteers from the group to chart desired destinations, potential new development, trail-friendly property owners, known easements, city-owned property, and known vistas and natural features that will enhance the route of the greenway. During the subsequent field trips, PATH made considerable effort to minimize the number of privately-owned parcels needed to develop the trails. PATH consulted with the volunteer group to identify "trail-friendly" property owners and propose the trail on their property where the opportunity existed. In some cases, these property owners had been contacted previously by the volunteer group to solicit their support for the concept of having a trail and linear park on their property.

PATH and the volunteer group reconvened to review the trail alignments proposed after the field visits. Henry County plans were reviewed to make certain the Hampton plan was compatible. The draft of this plan was reviewed by volunteers, city officials, and the citizens of Hampton at a public meeting before the final document was released.



HAMPTON GREENWAY OVERALL MAP



Speedway Trail

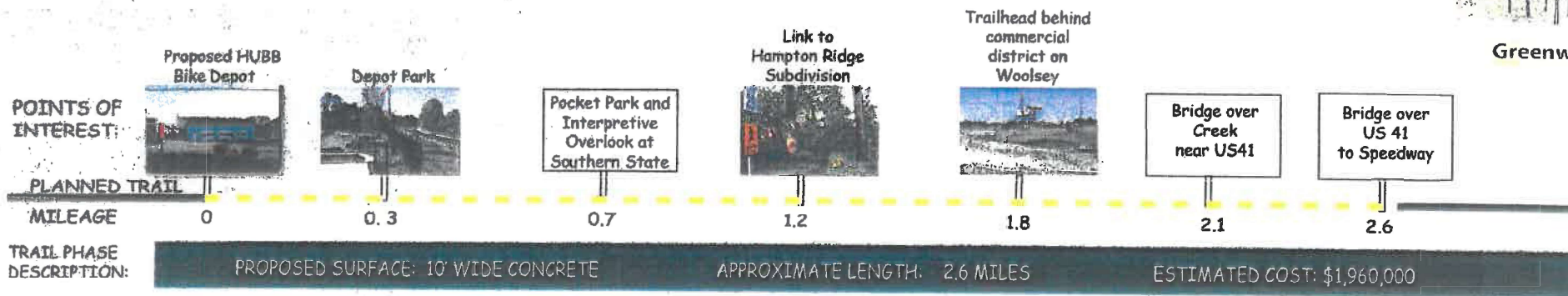
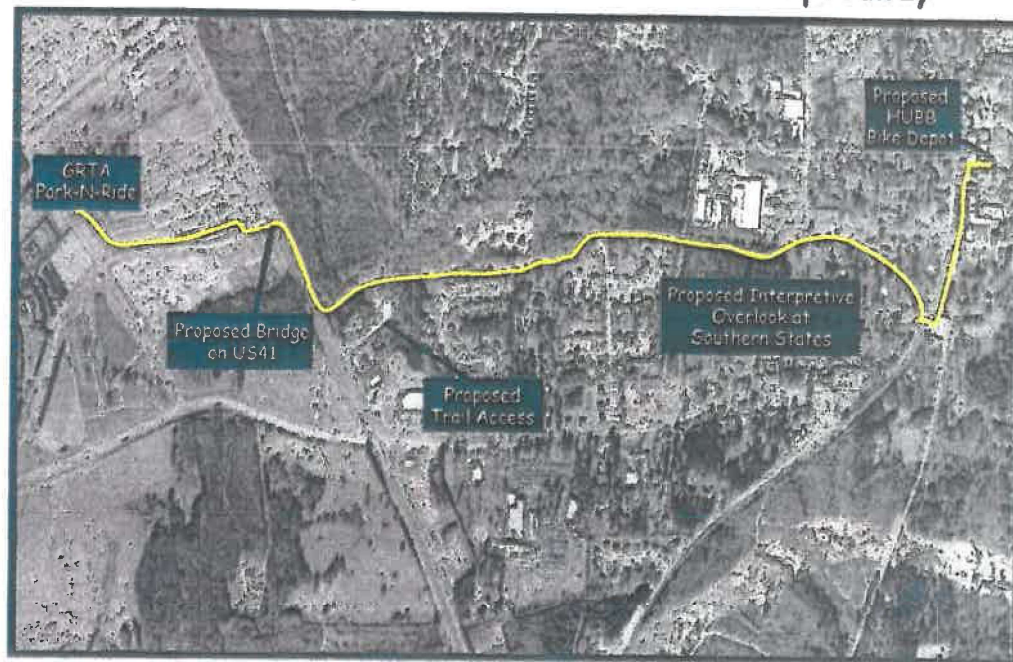
The Speedway Trail will connect the Park-N-Ride transit stop at the Atlanta Motor Speedway to the proposed HUBB bike depot on James Street in downtown Hampton. This trail will allow visitors to the Speedway to safely cross over US-41 on a pedestrian bridge and visit the commercial and historical districts of Hampton. It will also give Hamptonians pedestrian access to the GRTA Xpress transit bus stop at the Speedway.

The Speedway Trail will serve as the spine of the Hampton greenway network as it links the city to "suburban" west neighborhoods and the race-track. The 2.6 mile-long trail will pass through the recently constructed park adjacent to the historic depot and cross the Norfolk Southern Railroad with Woodlawn Avenue, continuing as a linear park adjacent to the south side of the Southern States facility on Central Avenue.

The trail will then traverse the greenspace presently owned by Southern States and pass through the Hampton Ridge subdivision before entering the floodplain east of US-41. Access to the trail is proposed from the shopping area at the corner of US 41 and Woolsey Drive. The trail is then proposed to parallel or coincide with Woolsey Drive to the Xpress Park-N-Ride lot at the Speedway.

It is rather easy to visualize citizens riding a bike or walking to the Park-N-Ride lot from one of the quaint Hampton neighborhoods and being shuttled off to work in the big city. It is also a reasonable expectation that residents will be riding the commuter train to the new Hampton depot and using the Speedway Trail to complete their trip home in the near future. The Speedway Trail will serve as an exceptional recreational amenity for Hampton and its visitors as it links key destinations and promotes a sense of community.

Downtown Hampton to the Atlanta Motor Speedway



Bear Creek Trail

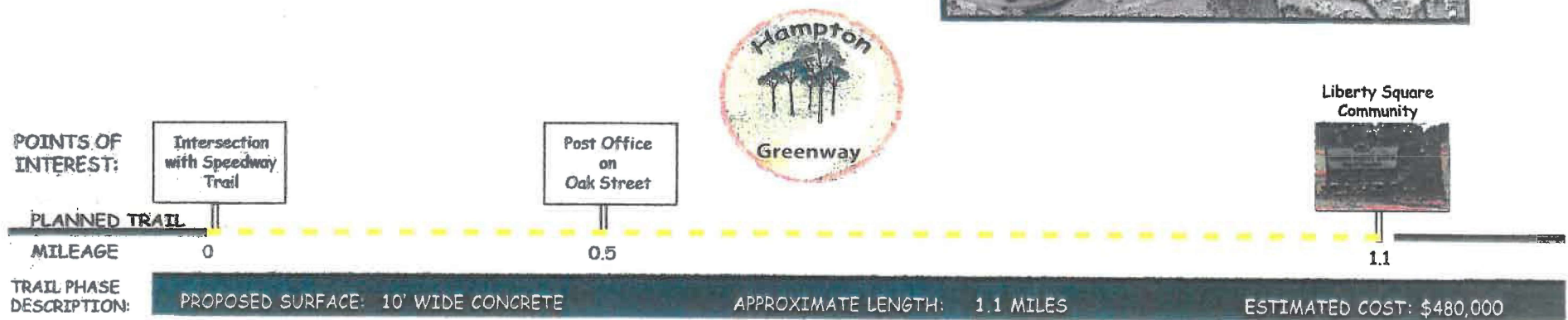
Greenspace abounds either side of Bear Creek between Liberty Square and the Speedway. This is an ideal venue for quiet, shady bike rides on the Bear Creek Trail. The corridor is typically a flood plain but not a wetland. The land cannot be developed in typical fashion, however it provides an incredible opportunity for a natural linear park and trail.

The Bear Creek Trail will intersect the Speedway Trail in the low land across from the Woolsey Drive entrance to Atlanta Motor Speedway. The trail will parallel Bear Creek northward, providing linkage to the Post Office and commercial center on Oak Street and to the Liberty Square community.

This will be Hampton's most natural greenway corridor, providing opportunities to view wildlife, lowland vegetation, and a mountain-like stream unspoiled by development. This trail would be the preferred location for an outdoor classroom, a wildlife viewing platform, and interpretive signage for plants and animals. The 1.1 mile-long trail will include a couple of short bridges and possibly a boardwalk section or two, depending upon the condition of the sub base encountered. It may be installed over the existing sewer line, thereby minimizing further damage to the natural environment along the creek.

For residents in Liberty Square, the Bear Creek Trail will be the link to the Speedway Trail and downtown Hampton. For residents of other Hampton neighborhoods, the Bear Creek trail will be the nature walk or the western leg of the loop around the City. It will be the "greenest" mile of the system for years to come since it has the flood plain to protect it from development.

Speedway Trail to Liberty Square Park



North Forty Trail

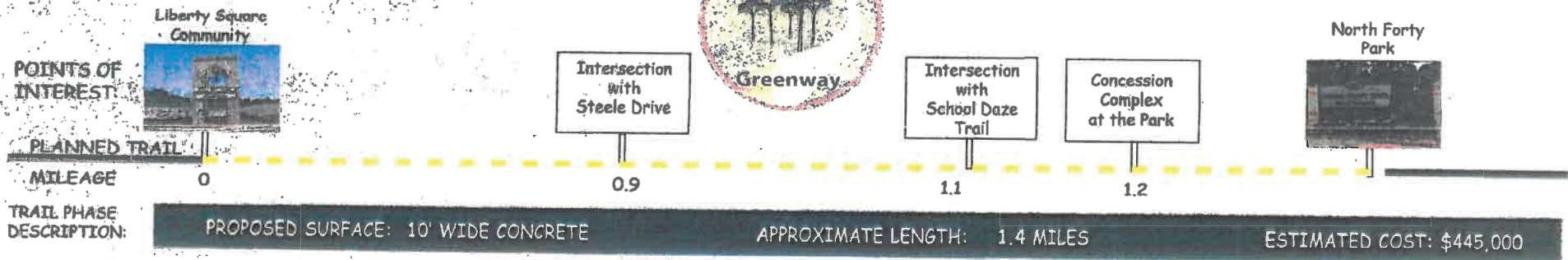
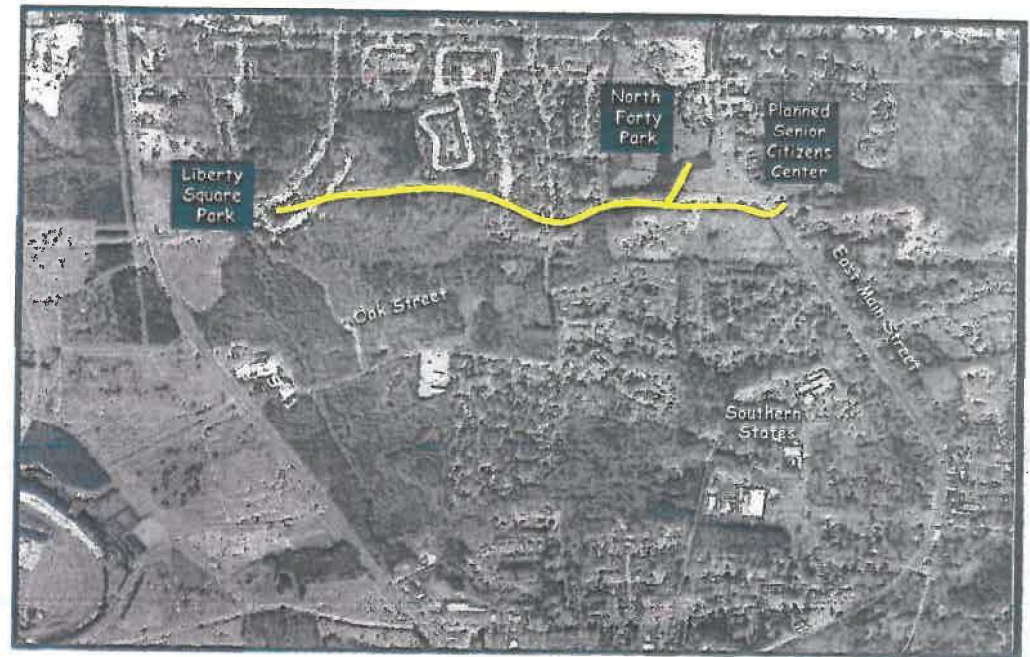
Today, residents of Hampton who visit North Forty Park must get in a car and drive there. West Main Street, the only access to the park, is scarcely wide enough for two cars and has no sidewalk to the adjacent neighborhoods. Pedestrians and bicyclists who attempt to share the road are in harms way, especially before and after park events. The North Forty Trail will connect everyone in Hampton to the park thereby promoting walking and biking to park events.

It is much easier to install bike racks than it is to expand parking lots. The North Forty Trail will encourage citizens of Hampton to take a healthy walk or bike ride to the park rather than arriving by car.

The route for this 1.4 mile-long trail was chosen to minimize the number of private properties involved. The trail will connect the Liberty Square community and the Bear Creek trail to North Forty Park and the proposed Senior Citizen's facility. This trail will form the north segment of the greenway loop around the City.

New development will likely occur along either side of the North Forty Trail. This makes it important for the community to acquire as much right-of-way for the greenway as possible to insure that the trees and greenspace on either side of the trail do not disappear as new homes are built nearby. This trail will no doubt increase the adjacent property values and serve as the catalyst for development in it's path. It is important to protect the greenway with setbacks and to establish a policy for crossings when easements are negotiated with landowners along the route.

Liberty Square Park to the North Forty Park



School Daze Trail

Hampton Elementary School should be connected to the surrounding community with sidewalks and safe places to cross streets. Neighborhoods less than 500 feet away are separated from the school by either busy streets with no sidewalks or a forest. The School Daze Trail will connect the school to the balance of the greenway system enabling children to safely walk or bike to school from almost any neighborhood in Hampton.

The School Daze Trail will also provide a connection to North Forty Park, thereby expanding the recreational facilities at the school. This trail forms the eastern leg of the Greenway loop between the Speedway Trail and the North Forty Trail.

This 0.9 mile trail requires the acquisition of slivers of private property between Oak Grove Estates and Hampton West in order to connect the school to the park and make a continuous greenway. The trail will connect McBrayer Park to the North Forty Park thereby providing access to both parks to all citizens along the greenway system. This will be the least costly trail segment to build since it will require no bridges or boardwalks.

Speedway Trail to North Forty Park and Trail



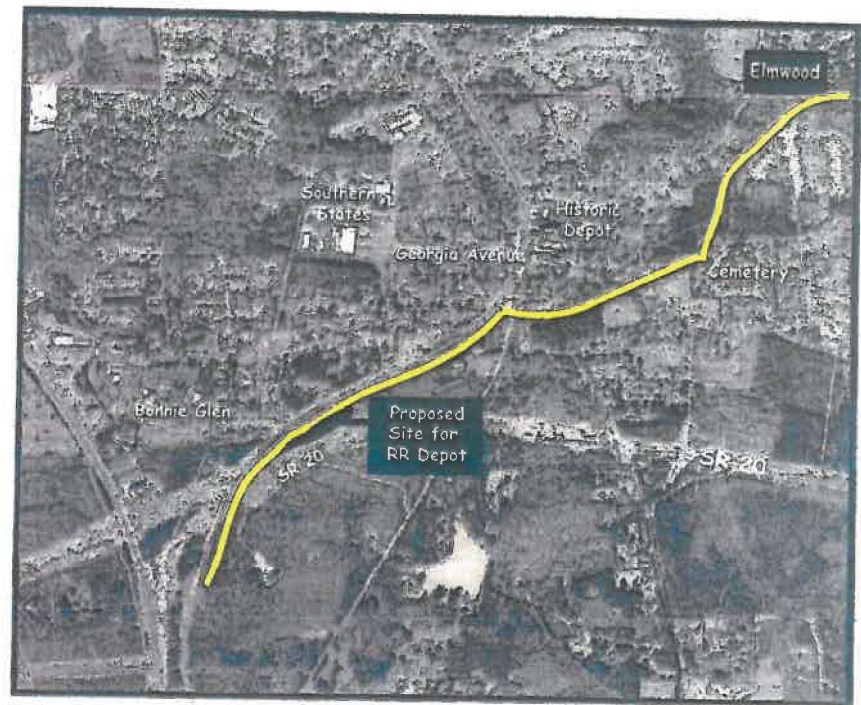
Depot Trail

The future growth in Hampton will likely be concentrated south and east with the new and improved SR 20, and the proposed commuter rail depot on the horizon. The Depot Trail will extend from the eastern city limits to the southern city limits, connecting new development east of the city to the proposed depot site and SR 20.

The Depot Trail can be extended south along Old Griffin Road, and east to proposed new subdivisions with time. For now this trail will serve the citizens of Field Street Station, Elmwood, Olde Hampton Place, and the Elm Street corridor as a connection to the greenway system. The southern mile of the trail will eventually connect the new depot to the existing downtown area and the balance of the system.

The Depot trail will be 2.5 miles long, intersecting the Speedway Trail where Woodlawn Avenue crosses the Norfolk Southern track. The trail will travel through "The Hamptons" subdivision and along the periphery of the cemetery on McDonough Street. The proposed alignment crosses several privately owned parcels between the cemetery and the City Limits near Lacebark Lane. This corridor, if assembled, could be an incredible, tree-lined park from the Cemetery eastward.

City Limits South of SR 20 to City Limits near Elmwood



POINTS OF INTEREST:

PLANNED TRAIL

MILEAGE

TRAIL PHASE DESCRIPTION:

The Hamptons Subdivision



1.1

Cemetery



1.9

Greenway

2.5

PROPOSED SURFACE: 10' WIDE CONCRETE

APPROXIMATE LENGTH: 2.5 MILES

ESTIMATED COST: \$770,000

DESIGN STANDARDS

THE CITY OF HAMPTON WISHES TO DEVELOP A WORLD-CLASS GREENWAY AND TRAIL SYSTEM FOR THE CITY THAT CAN BE EXTENDED TO INCLUDE NEW DEVELOPMENT ANTICIPATED IN THE COMING YEARS. EMPHASIS WILL BE ON QUALITY AND DURABILITY RATHER THAN QUICK MILES ON THE GROUND.

THE PATH FOUNDATION HAS ESTABLISHED DESIGN STANDARDS THAT HAVE SERVED NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES WELL. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, THE HAMPTON GREENWAY WILL BE DEVELOPED WITH THE DESIGN STANDARDS USED BY PATH.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THE HAMPTON GREENWAY

TRAIL SURFACE: FIVE-INCH THICK, 3000 PSI CONCRETE WITH A MEDIUM BROOM FINISH
TRAIL WIDTH: NOMINAL TEN FEET WIDE; SPUR TRAILS AND CONNECTIONS WILL BE EIGHT FEET WIDE
SHOULDERS: GRASSED, MINIMUM THREE FEET WIDE
AMENITIES: BLACK METAL BENCHES, SIGN POSTS, AND TRASH RECEPTACLES (PICTURED)
SIGNS & STRIPPING: STANDARD SIGNS WITH BLACK REVERSE; CENTER LINE STRIPING
BRIDGES: PRE-ENGINEERED BLACK METAL BRIDGES WHEN OVER THIRTY FEET LONG; BOARDWALK BRIDGES WHEN SPAN IS UNDER THIRTY FEET (PICTURED)
CROSSINGS: "URBAN" STRIPED CROSSWALKS WITH WARNING SIGNS FOR TRAIL & MOTORIST
REST STOPS: INDIVIDUALLY LOCATED AND DESIGNED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF VIEWS, EXISTING TREES, ETC.
BOARDWALKS: PRESSURED TREATED LUMBER WITH RAILING (PICTURED)

ALL TRAIL SEGMENTS TO BE HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE AND BUILT TO A.A.S.H.T.O. STANDARDS



SUMMARY MATRIX (COST DOES NOT INCLUDE PURCHASE OF LAND)

PRELIMINARY NAME	APPROX LENGTH (MILES)	APPROX WIDTH (FEET)	BASE COST TO CONSTRUCT (ESTIMATE)	COST OF BRIDGES/ BOARDWALKS (ESTIMATE)	TOTAL COST (ESTIMATE)
SPEEDWAY TRAIL	2.6	10 FT	\$685,000	\$1,275,000	\$1,960,000
BEAR CREEK TRAIL	1.1	10 FT	\$320,000	\$160,000	\$480,000
NORTH FORTY TRAIL	1.4	10 FT	\$370,000	\$85,000	\$455,000
SCHOOL DAZE TRAIL	0.9	10 FT	\$235,000	\$60,000	\$295,000
DEPOT TRAIL	2.5	10 FT	\$660,000	\$110,000	\$770,000
TOTALS	8.5		\$2,270,000	\$1,690,000	\$3,960,000

MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY

Maintenance

A comprehensive maintenance program must be in place before the Hampton greenway is built! The Hampton Greenway is being proposed as a "maintenance friendly" facility with a durable concrete surface and metal amenities and bridges. The City of Hampton must identify a source of funding that will perpetually maintain the greenways and keep them in peak condition.

There are additional standards that can be incorporated into the design that will reduce maintenance needs:

- * Mulched shoulders rather than seed in natural areas.
- * Cleared vegetation ten feet or more from the edges of, and above, trails in natural areas to minimize the need for trimming and debris removal.
- * Trash receptacles installed generously along trail route.

In addition to the City's maintenance program, friends of the trail should agree to "adopt" sections and provide enhanced maintenance such as planting flowers, weeding, reporting problems, etc.

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 City can use to establish an annual budget each year for maintenance of the Hampton Greenway.



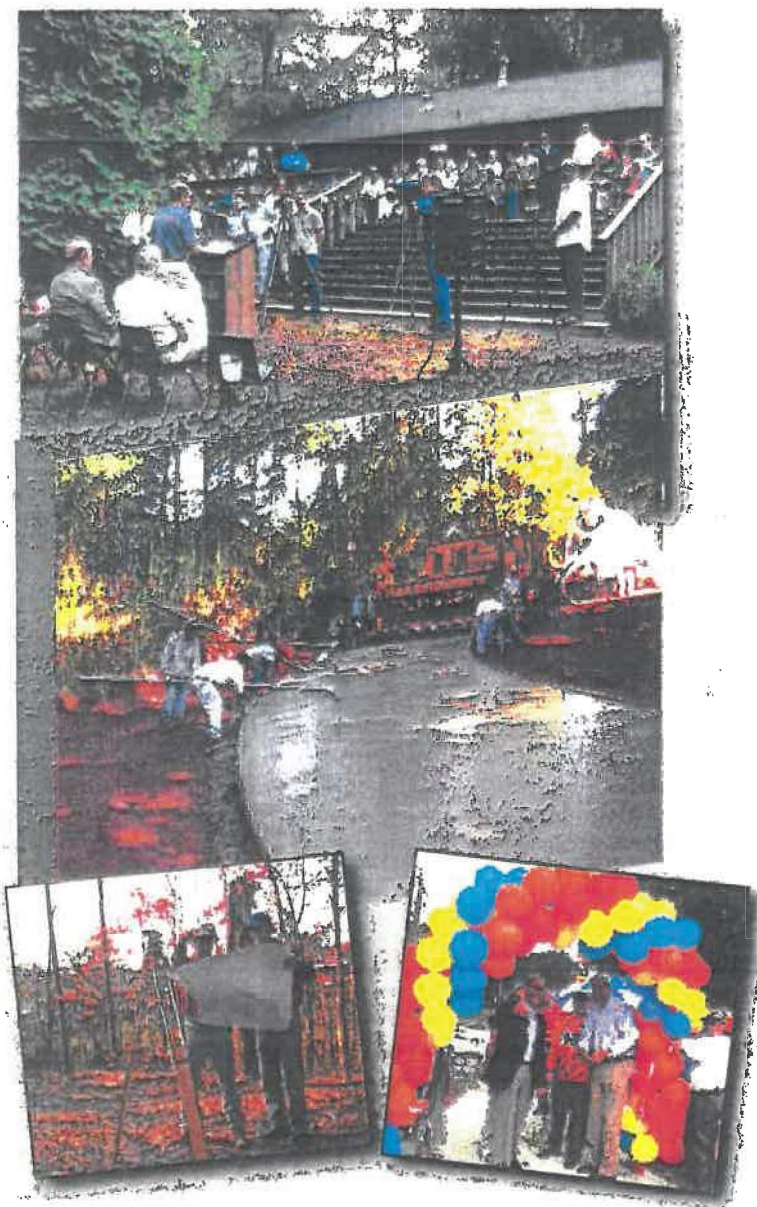
Security

The perception by many is that trails are unsafe unless patrolled by police. In reality, trails are self patrolled by the people who use them.

The City of Hampton Police Department will recognize the development of the Hampton Greenway as an opportunity to interact with citizens by establishing a bicycle patrol along the trail and through adjacent neighborhoods. These patrols have been extraordinarily successful in Atlanta and DeKalb, Cobb, and Paulding Counties. Officers find they stay better informed and are able to prevent crimes more easily on bicycle patrol than they ever did in their cars.

The citizens should gladly accept the concept of having police officers on trails behind their homes as well as on the street out front. Trail crime is virtually nonexistent nationwide. There is no reason to believe Hampton's experience with trails will be any different.





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The City of Hampton has the opportunity to establish a network of linear parks and trails before anticipated development arrives. Regardless of how the City develops, a labyrinth of greenspace and trails weaving through the City will only enhance the property values and quality of life for everyone who chooses Hampton as their hometown. It is important to take action now to preserve the opportunities and secure the future of the Greenway system. The City and the sponsoring group should:

- ✚ Officially adopt the Hampton Greenway Master Plan and make it part of the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan to preserve land for the greenway as development is proposed.
- ✚ Submit the adopted plan to the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority as part of the regional transportation plan.
- ✚ Organize a "friends of the trail" group to guide development of the trail.
- ✚ Submit copies of the adopted plan to U.S. and State legislators with a cover letter asking for financial assistance to implement the plan.
- ✚ Submit a copy of the adopted plan to Georgia Department of Transportation Board member with a letter notifying her that the City intends to seek Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding for segments of the project.
- ✚ Approach private property owners along the Greenway route and seek donations of land and easements for the project. Any acquisition must be completed prior to seeking TE funding or after environmental work for the TE project is completed.
- ✚ Amend future city water and sewer easements to allow for recreational trails over new water and sewer lines.
- ✚ Adopt an ordinance to govern activity on the trails.
- ✚ Establish a trail maintenance program.
- ✚ Prioritize trail segments based on availability of right-of-way, community support, and funding requirements.
- ✚ Complete a TE funding application and submit during the fall of 2005 for the first segment of the Hampton Greenway.

