

MERIT CRITERIA

CRITERIA SUMMARY	
RAISE MERIT CRITERIA	HOW THIS PROJECT ADDRESSES THE RAISE MERIT CRITERIA
<p>SAFETY Protect community from safety risks and reduce fatalities and serious injuries in underserved communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements proven safety countermeasures that separate vulnerable roadway users from vehicle traffic and reduce fatalities and serious injuries. • Improves the active transportation network, reducing vehicular and non-vehicular conflicts and crashes.
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY Adds significant environmental sustainability benefits by considering climate change and environmental justice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invests in active transportation facilities that will reduce vehicle use and related emissions. • Implements features that reduce unequal transportation impacts on underserved communities and the environment.
<p>QUALITY OF LIFE Provide benefits that improve quality of life for underserved community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases urban tree canopy in areas of raised temperatures. • Invests in urban design and features that improve public health within at-risk communities.
<p>ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS Strengthen economic competitiveness in Areas of Persistent Poverty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracts tourism by connecting to the Riverwalk, birthplace of the Chattanooga Renaissance. • Encourages equitable residential development. • Capitalizes on the City’s DBE program.
<p>IMPROVES MOBILITY + COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY Provide significant benefits that increase mobility and community connectivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconnects underserved communities by creating a trail that overcomes physical barriers. • Implements local plans, increasing accessibility.
<p>STATE OF GOOD REPAIR Maintains and improves state of good repair of infrastructure asset.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-purposes inactive railway corridor beyond useful life. • Creates direct connections between divided communities. • Reduces costs due to design and maintenance standards.
<p>PARTNERSHIP + COLLABORATION Engages diverse people and communities, going above and beyond in establishing partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread support, especially among community voices. • Builds upon proven public-private partnership. • Pursues project workforce participation for local residents.
<p>INNOVATION Incorporates innovative technology and project delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian counters to track usage and support further expansion efforts. • Public-private partnership supports on-time and on-budget delivery.

PRIMARY SELECTION CRITERIA

A | SAFETY

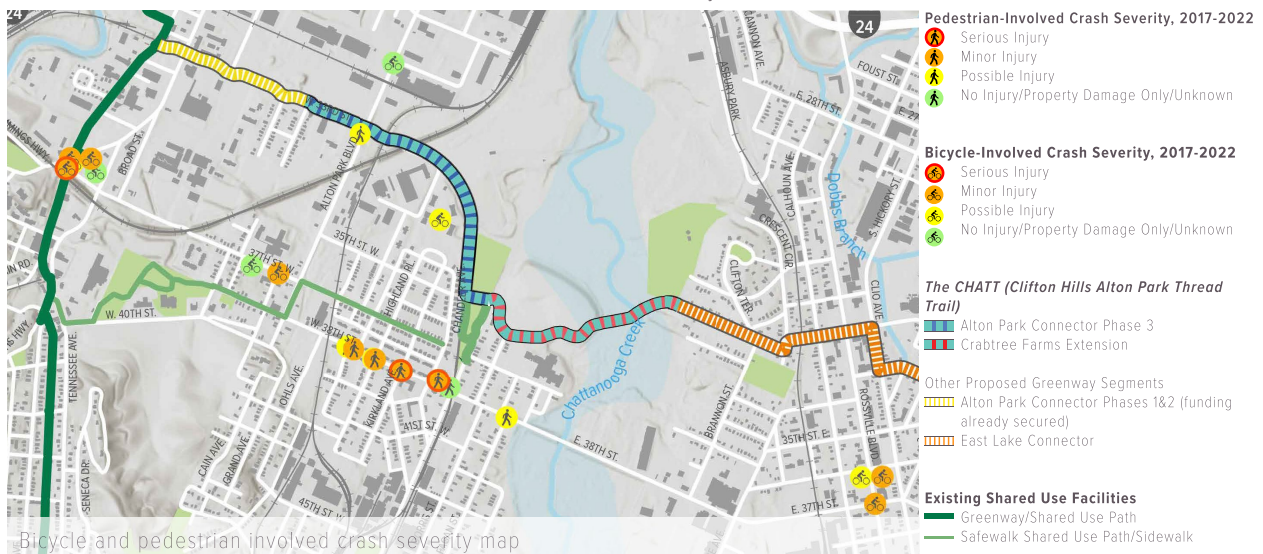
A1 Challenge: Crash Rates above State-Wide Averages

Both Clifton Hills and Alton Park have been identified as Communities of Concern based on the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool, with at least 50% of the population meeting one or more of seven equity variables. An analysis by Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) compared an area of 18 block groups around the Alton Park Connector, 16 of which are Communities of Concern, with statewide Communities of Concern. The comparison found that while statewide in Tennessee, about 12% of bike/pedestrian crashes in Communities of Concern resulted in fatalities or serious injuries, in the 16 Communities of Concern block groups surrounding the Alton Park Connector, the number was significantly higher, with about 21% of bike/pedestrian crashes resulting in fatalities or serious injuries. Collision data within the study area also showed roadways with a high frequency of crashes, including W/E 38th St., W 37th St., Alton Park Blvd.,

Broad St. and Rossville Blvd. (within the project scope). These roads provide important connections throughout the area for both motorized and non-motorized transportation.

A1 Solution: Reduce Conflicts between Vulnerable Roadway Users and Vehicle Traffic

The CHATT will create a separated facility and bike boulevard facility that provides a safe space for walking and biking where residents can avoid conflicts with vehicle traffic. The trail will improve safety conditions in areas with significant sidewalk gaps, such as W 33rd St., where there is no consistent route between destinations, like residential areas and the Riverwalk, and the Clifton Hills neighborhood and Clifton Hills Elementary. The trail alignment will provide alternative routes for those walking and biking, allowing users to avoid roadways with a high frequency of crashes, such as E 38th St., W 33rd St., and Rossville Blvd, and reducing potential points of conflict on these roads. This can reduce fatalities and serious injuries in these underserved communities and bring the area’s high crash rates below state averages. Additionally, the CHATT will create bike boulevards with sidewalks and several high-visibility crosswalks, enhancing pedestrian and cycling safety on low-traffic streets like E. 32nd Street.



A2 Challenge: Safety Risks Caused by Gaps in the Network

The current active transportation network throughout the study area lacks complete or consistent facilities, creating safety challenges for those walking and biking. Gaps in sidewalk connectivity and lack of separated bicycle facilities force vulnerable roadway users to use undesignated and unsafe paths along or within the roadway, bringing them dangerously close to vehicles. Additionally, the lack of traffic safety infrastructure on low-volume streets adjacent to routes like US-27 puts pedestrians and cyclists at risk from cut-through vehicle traffic, especially near Clifton Hills Elementary.

A2 Solution: Create Facilities to Reduce Safety Risks

Creating separated and buffered facilities will improve the safety of those walking and biking throughout the community by creating space between vulnerable roadway users and vehicle traffic, and minimizing potential points of conflict. This facility is a Proven Safety Countermeasure, as identified in the USDOT National Roadway Safety Strategy plan⁽¹⁾. The USDOT FHWA Highway Safety Program specifies that well-designed pedestrian walkways, shared use paths, and sidewalks improve the safety and mobility of pedestrians. The trail will be separated from the roadway by a planting strip, which can make users feel more comfortable while on the trail. A greater level of comfort on the trail can also increase the number of residents willing to walk or bike. The CHATT will utilize bike boulevards to prioritize cyclist safety on low traffic volume and low speed streets within the project, incorporating pavement marking, signage and speed management infrastructure like neighborhood traffic circles to enhance pedestrian safety at intersections and cyclist safety within the roadway⁽²⁾.

B | ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

B1 Challenge: Historic Misuse and Environmental Challenges

The Alton Park neighborhood has a long history of industrial use, which had a large impact on

development patterns and environmental conditions. Large parcels used for industrial buildings contributed to a scattered pattern of development for other land uses, creating lasting challenges for residents walking and biking around the neighborhood. Another lasting effect of industrial uses is how these communities experienced disproportionate exposure to contamination and pollution because of unregulated dumping of hazardous waste and transportation-related pollution that accompanied industrial uses.

B1 Solution: Improve Walkability, Access, and Environmental Conditions

The trail will benefit these historically disadvantaged communities by improving the area's development patterns and environmental conditions. The trail will create connections throughout the area that provide options for active transportation and shorten distances to neighborhood destinations, such as parks and other green spaces. For example, the distance from the residential area of Alton Park to Crabtree Farms would be reduced from about 1.5 miles along a high-traffic road to a 0.5-mile trip along the trail. The project will help reverse the disproportionate pollution exposure trend while reducing future transportation-related emissions.

B2 Challenge: Disproportionate Environmental Impacts

The Chattanooga Creek, which runs through the study area, has seen years of contamination throughout the neighborhood's history of industrial uses and was the subject of a recently completed Superfund project. Proximity to this Superfund site makes both

1 <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/walkways>

2 <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/21013/21013.pdf>

project census tracts 19,23, 24, and 25 Legacy Pollution communities⁽³⁾. This creek requires maintenance and monitoring to reduce its effects on the surrounding community. The creek sits between Clifton Hills and Alton Park, surrounded by a large floodplain that frequently holds water. With very few existing crossings, Chattanooga Creek is a chasm in the center of South Chattanooga, acting as a major barrier between the two neighborhoods and a potential environmental health hazard.

B2 Solution: Design Natural Infrastructure Features to Mitigate Environmental Impacts

Stormwater management features, such as bioswales, are commonly incorporated into trail design to increase environmental benefits. The CHATT will use bioswales with channels and vegetation to capture stormwater and treat it by removing debris and pollution. This facility will help prevent stormwater runoff from traveling through contaminated land and further polluting Chattanooga Creek.

In addition, redeveloping a brownfield site, the former CSX rail corridor, through removing and safely capping contaminated soil will address the disproportionately negative environmental impacts on underserved communities such as Alton Park.

B3 Challenge: Increasing Vehicle Miles Traveled

The number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Hamilton County has steadily increased from 2013 to 2019, with a small decrease in 2020 and high VMT returning in 2021⁽³⁻⁴⁾. Because

³ <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/long-range-planning-home/long-range-road-inventory/longrange-road-inventory-highway-performance-monitoring-system.html>

⁴ Chattanooga-Hamilton County Air Pollution Control Network Review 2020 https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/environment/air/documents/apc_board/2022_coe/hamilton-county/apc-network-review-2020.pdf

of the auto-centric nature of Chattanooga, driving is often one of the only transportation options available to residents, especially for those within the study area, who are surrounded by physical infrastructure and natural barriers that restrict connectivity to other parts of the city. This increases transportation-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

B3 Solution: Alternative Transportation Options to Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled and Reduce Transportation-related Air Pollution and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This trail connection will create an attractive transportation option for residents that provides access to key destinations without using a car, helping to reduce VMT throughout the city. Residents can travel by biking or walking across Chattanooga Creek to new employment centers, such as the South Broad District, and be less dependent on vehicles.

B4 Challenge: Transportation-Related Emissions Creating Air Pollution

In 2020, the transportation sector made up 50.3% of energy-related CO₂ emissions in Tennessee ⁽⁵⁾. Besides contributing to climate change, these emissions can negatively impact air quality. They can be harmful to those who breathe the air, leading to an increase in the prevalence of chronic respiratory diseases. The health-disadvantaged communities of Clifton Hills and Alton Park are especially vulnerable to these chronic respiratory impacts because of their respective rank in the 78th and 70th percentile for the amount of diesel exhaust in the air⁽⁶⁾.

⁵ <https://www.eia.gov/environment/emissions/state/>

⁶ <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#12.43/35.00494/-85.29659>

B4 Solution: Reduce Vehicle Emissions That Impact Air Quality and Health

The CHATT will create emission-free transportation options, reducing emissions in the area. The decreased emissions will improve air quality throughout the community and positively benefit the health of residents in the area. It will provide a transportation option away from busy roads and vehicular pollution. This aligns with the U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization.

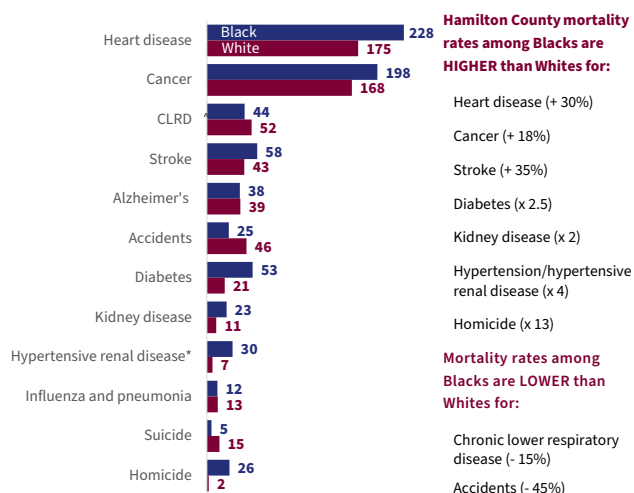
C | QUALITY OF LIFE

C1 Challenge: Public Health Challenges in Justice40 Communities

Residents within the four census tracts along the project corridor, both Historically Disadvantaged Communities with a large Black population, are greatly affected by chronic diseases. All are above the 90th percentile for the share of people with asthma, diabetes, and heart disease, as well as low life expectancy (7).

7 Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#17.85/35.003566/-85.290323>

Age-Adjusted Mortality Rates (per 100,000 population) for Leading Causes of Death for Hamilton County by Race (2013-2015)



²CLRD: chronic lower respiratory disease
* Hypertension and hypertensive renal disease

Grave health disparities surround the communities the CHATT would travel through. The Alton Park neighborhood has the second-worst health outcomes in Tennessee, while the healthiest community in the state, Lookout Mountain, is only 0.5 miles above Alton Park at the mountain's apex (8). The 2019 Hamilton County Community Health Profile identifies lack of physical activity as one major risk behavior related to chronic disease prevalence and is a risk behavior that affects 30% of Hamilton County residents (9). Another major risk factor identified is poor nutrition, including diets low in fruits and vegetables and high in sodium and saturated fats (9). This risk behavior is challenging to address in food deserts or low-income tracts where a significant number or share of residents do not have easy access to a supermarket. According to the USDA, both census tracts within the study area are considered food deserts. Many residents within Clifton Hills live more than 0.5 miles from the nearest supermarket, and many within Alton Park live more than 1 mile away (10). Difficulties accessing fresh foods are further exacerbated by the number of residents without access to a personal vehicle to reach food sources.

C1 Solution: Create Facilities to Promote Physical Activity and Improve Public Health

The proposed urban trail will transform the largely urban areas of Clifton Hills and Alton Park by creating a safe, convenient, and accessible space for recreational use and opportunities to use modes of active transportation that contribute to a healthy and physically active lifestyle and health outcomes

8 One Chattanooga Strategic Framework

9 Hamilton County Community Health Profile https://health.hamiltontn.org/Portals/14/DataPublications/Docs/2019%20Report%20Final%202019-02-28_docx.pdf

10 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>

in the community. In a 2019 report, the Tennessee Department of Health outlined the expected return on investment of health-promoting community design, describing ways the built environment can directly impact health by promoting healthy behaviors. These health improvements can be seen in a reduction of health care costs. Adults at high risk for heart disease have been shown to save 17% on health care costs by meeting physical activity recommendations. The annual return for a trail user to meet physical activity recommendations compared to the annual cost for trail maintenance has a cost-benefit ratio of 9:1 (11). Urban trails provide convenient and low-cost ways for residents to be physically active in their neighborhood. The trail will also improve connections throughout these neighborhoods to fresh produce and healthy food options at Crabtree Farms, helping to improve nutrition and positively impact another major risk factor of chronic diseases.

C2 Challenge: Urban Heat Island Effect within Community

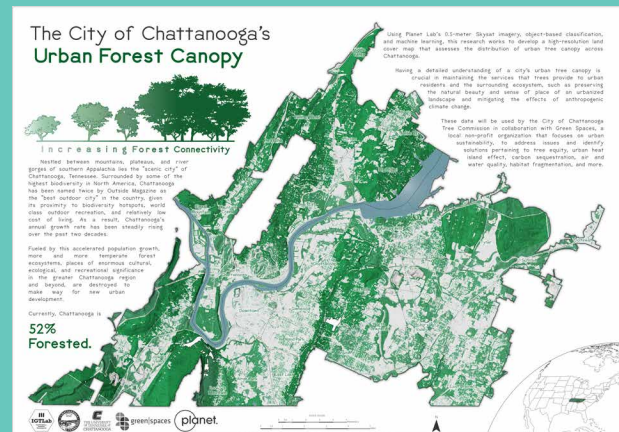
One major effect of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change is rising temperatures in an area. This is especially hazardous in urban areas where the built environment has reduced certain features that aid in urban cooling, causing an Urban Heat Island Effect that exacerbates high temperatures. The residential areas of Clifton Hills and Alton Park are especially vulnerable to these high temperatures, as they lack urban cooling features, such as a significant tree canopy. In addition to acting as severe Urban Heat Islands (12), certain

11 Health Promoting Community Design Outline of Expected Returns https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/program-areas/primary-prevention/ROI%20Toolkit_Final.pdf

12 <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cbe75004474545c2bb98b40a-6dacb2c>

areas within Clifton Hills have been identified as Heat Risk Priority Zones, where residents experience high temperatures in the area and live more than 10 minutes away from a park that has significant tree canopy that can aid in urban cooling (13).

13 TPL ParkServe



C2 Solution: Include Design Features to Mitigate Climate Change Effects

The design of the CHATT will include landscaping features, such as street trees, that will increase the tree canopy of the study area and contribute to urban cooling that will help mitigate Urban Heat Island Effects. Trees planted along the project corridor will also provide shade to those walking and biking in the area, which will encourage biking and walking and can improve the resilience of these Justice40 communities as they face increasing temperatures due to climate change (14).

14 ESRI CMRA mapping tool

C3 Challenge: Limited and Expensive Transportation Choices

The neighborhoods of Clifton Hills and Alton Park are separated from much of Chattanooga by physical barriers that contribute to transportation challenges for these historically disadvantaged communities. Infrastructure, such as the railroad and I-24, present challenges for connections to downtown, and environmental barriers, such as topography and the Chattanooga Creek, exist to the east and west of the Alton Park area. These barriers make certain modes of transportation, like active transportation, especially difficult for residents traveling through the city. Those living in the transportation-disadvantaged communities also have less access to transportation by car than residents living in other areas of the city.

While only 8.3% of households across Chattanooga do not have access to a vehicle, 33% of households in the census block groups within Alton Park do not have access to a vehicle (15).

¹⁵ 2022 ACS 5 year estimates. [https://data.census.gov/table?t=Housing&q=1400000US47065001900\\$1500000,47065002300\\$1500000&tid=ACSDT5Y2021.B25044](https://data.census.gov/table?t=Housing&q=1400000US47065001900$1500000,47065002300$1500000&tid=ACSDT5Y2021.B25044)



Neighborhood playground behind Piney Woods Elementary School in Alton Park.

C3 Solution: Create Affordable Transportation Options

The CHATT will create connections to the Riverwalk and the larger active transportation network that reaches across the city. This trail connection will provide affordable transportation options to 676 households within the census block groups the trail passes through (CT 19, BG1, CT 19 BG2, CT 23 BG1, CT 24 BG4, and CT 25 BG2, CT 25 BG3) that don't have access to a vehicle, helping to reduce the transportation cost burden on residents (16). According to 2022 ACS 5-year estimates, all four census tracts are at least double the number of zero-vehicle households compared to the city. The trail connection will create first and last-mile connections to transit routes through the area. Clifton Hills and Alton Park residents will have greater access to employment, as these two disadvantaged communities are in the 98th and 99th percentile, respectively, for the number of unemployed residents. Residents will also have greater access to services throughout Chattanooga, such as healthcare facilities, schools, recreation areas, and grocery stores.

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. "Tenure by Vehicles Available." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B25044, 2022. <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.B25044?t=Housing&q=1500000US470650019001,470650019002,470650019003,470650023001,470650024003,470650024004,470650025002,470650025003>. Accessed on February 22, 2024

D | MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

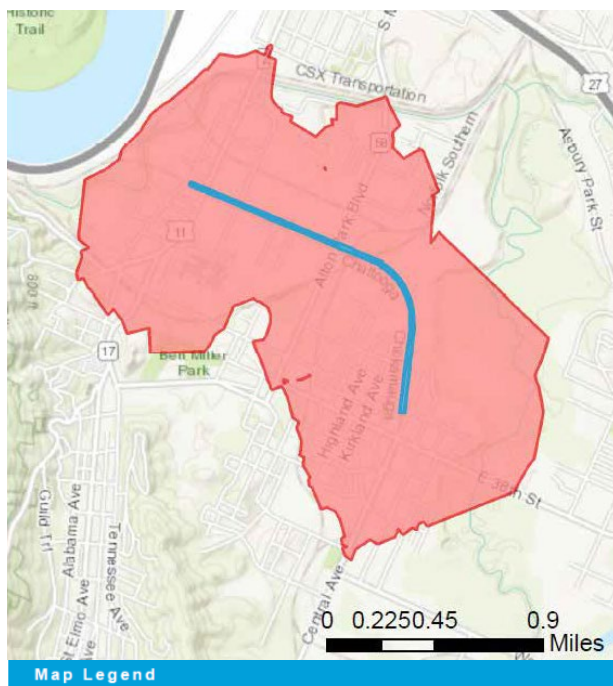
D1 Challenge: Physical Barriers Separate Communities from Direct Affordable Transportation Options

Current connectivity within the study area is inconsistent and inaccessible for many, failing to meet ADA standards. Alton Park's leading thoroughfare, W 33rd St., runs parallel to the proposed trail alignment, only 40 feet to the south, but has significant stretches with no sidewalks and tight right-of-way. Additional hazardous walking conditions include a very narrow, sidewalk-less underpass under a railroad corridor with only a 10-foot clearance and a subsequent at-grade railroad crossing with no sidewalk infrastructure. Public input received during the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan engagement process noted these barriers as significant challenges for walking and biking in the neighborhood. As one survey respondent noted in that planning process, "Riding Alton Park Blvd. is high stress with a narrow tunnel, no bike lanes and no alternative route to/from

downtown at Alton Park Blvd. past W 33rd inside the railroad tunnel, it is too narrow for both a bike and a car, quite a frightening experience." (17)

D1 Solution: Removing Barriers and Improving System-wide Connectivity

The design of the trail, a 12 ft. wide shared-use path through Component 1 (Alton Park Connector Phase 3) a 12 ft. wide path and a bike boulevard through Component 2 (Clifton Hills Connector), will accommodate a large number of users and allow for many different modes of transportation, like walking, biking, scootering, and others. Trail connections to destinations along the trail, such as parks, schools, and multifamily housing, will create convenient access and encourage use throughout the community. The CHATT will create first- and last-mile connections



Right: 10 minute walkshed for Alton Park Connector Phase 3 from 10-Minute Walk Impact Report, TPL (2020)

for Clifton Hills and Alton Park residents by providing a necessary connection to transit routes along the 33rd St. corridor and Rossville Blvd corridor, improving system-wide connectivity.

D2 Challenge: Gaps in Existing Network Identified by Previous Plans

Previous plans developed with extensive community participation and adopted by the City of Chattanooga have identified transportation challenges and established goals for improving the transportation network and options for certain neighborhoods. The Alton Park Master Plan, adopted in 2000, presents a vision for improved transportation and mobility in the neighborhood. Similarly, the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2016, identified the Clifton Hills and Alton Park areas as locations of significant biking infrastructure gaps.¹⁷

D2 Solution: Alignment with Long-Range Plans and Goals

The creation of the CHATT aligns with implementation goals outlined in adopted plans, such as the Alton Park Master Plan and the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, and ongoing plans, such as the Parks and Outdoors Plan. Public input gathered from more than 500 community members for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan lists growing transportation options as a top priority for the city. Community feedback also describes the proposed trail alignment through Alton Park as an important connection, and the City's mayor recognizes this trail project as the number one priority for proposed greenways and trails in Chattanooga.

¹⁷ <https://2050rtp-chcrpa.hub.arcgis.com/>

E | ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND OPPORTUNITY

E1 Challenge: The Alton Park and Clifton Hills neighborhoods Lie within Areas of Persistent Poverty

Alton Park, and Clifton Hills have experienced long periods of disinvestment and lack of opportunities. Alton Park has been cut off from the Riverwalk, and the corresponding catalytic renaissance from its success. Additionally, the derelict rail corridor, as well as parallel I-24 to the north, have walled off Alton Park from the prosperity of the Southside Historic District, with its prominent attractions such as the Chattanooga Market and the Chattanooga Choo Choo. Furthermore, the public high school, the Howard School, is boxed in by both I-24 to its north and a CSX rail corridor to the south, one of the most active in the City, restricting safe routes to school. The Clifton Hills neighborhood is also isolated due to heavy rail infrastructure and traffic volume on Rossville Blvd (US-27), which limits neighborhood connections and impacts businesses along the route.

E1 Solution: Attract Tourism by Threading Alton Park and Clifton Hills Together and Connecting to the Major Catalyst of Chattanooga's Renaissance: The Riverwalk

The CHATT presents an opportunity for a new active transportation experience, with soaring views of Lookout Mountain offered in much of the western portion of the trail. Additionally, Alton Park is a neighborhood with rich but often unacknowledged history, such as the home of Charles Bell, the first Baptist pastor of the first African American church in Chattanooga. Alton Park was instrumental in electing the first Black council member in the Chattanooga area. Alton Park was a prominent industrial hub, hosting the Chattanooga Glass Co., one of the first bottle plants for the Coca-Cola Bottling Company.



Field trip at Crabtree Farms teaching benefits of food and farms.

Furthermore, the western terminus of the CHATT, when including the two small western segments with dedicated funding, will be only 1 mile from the planned Chattanooga Lookouts minor league baseball stadium, opening up access to the ballpark and the anticipated \$1.5 billion investment in new residential, office, retail, recreational, and educational facilities that will follow. The CHATT will be connected to the emerging South Broad District, which serves as an expansion of Chattanooga's enormously successful downtown revitalization (18).

The CHATT will connect to the Riverwalk, with peak pedestrian counts along Broad St. destinations reaching 20,000 for 24 hours, surveyed on two consecutive weekdays and one weekend day in the fall of 2021. The CHATT will connect residents to new jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Opportunity: The CHATT Will Encourage Mixed-Income Residential Development, Promoting Equitable Development

The largest affordable housing development in over a decade, with 240 units, broke ground in mid-2022, with the rental rates based on 80% Area Median Income (AMI). The development at 4905 Central Ave., is only 1 mile south of the CHATT alignment and Southside Community Park, still within the bikeshed of the trail, and for many pedestrians, also within the walkshed of the trail. Furthermore, market rate housing is also under construction adjacent to the trail with the Borough 33 Apartments, constructed in an opportunity zone. Additionally, a number of lots are planned for Habitat for Humanity homes developed under an affordable

18 UrbanLand ULI, <https://urbanland.uli.org/economy-markets-trends/the-40-year-vision-that-revitalized-downtown-chattanooga-2/>

homeownership program with financial support from the City of Chattanooga (19).

Opportunity: The CHATT Will Promote Greater Investments in Land-Use Productivity, Connecting to Initial Main Street Revitalization Efforts

The CHATT will build upon initial Main Street investments and impact local density decisions supporting equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development. The Alton Park Safewalk, with its main street investments of street furniture, trees, and lighting, was highlighted in the Alton Park/Piney Woods Community Plan (Update, 2010) as an important alternative transportation route to connect the Villages of Alton Park to vital neighborhood amenities like Calvin Donaldson Elementary School, South Chattanooga Recreation Center, the post office and library. Building on community input for the Safewalk, the CHATT prioritizes users' safety, visibility, and comfort, particularly considering the street crossings and travel at night due to the separated grade at multiple places along the path. These improvements will enable additional land-use productivity and could attract various new investments.

19 [https://chattanooga.gov/city-council-files/OrdinancesAndResolutions/Resolutions/Resolutions%202023/31439%20Award%20\\$40,000%20for%20Habitat%20for%20Humanity%20-%20543%20West%2037th%20Street.pdf](https://chattanooga.gov/city-council-files/OrdinancesAndResolutions/Resolutions/Resolutions%202023/31439%20Award%20$40,000%20for%20Habitat%20for%20Humanity%20-%20543%20West%2037th%20Street.pdf)



Southside Community Park, Alton Park.

Opportunity: The City of Chattanooga has a Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program

Designed to identify minority-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, woman-owned, and LGBTQ-owned businesses, the Minority- and Women-Owned Business Program seeks to assist these businesses in becoming active suppliers with the City of Chattanooga, with the intent to help mitigate the effects of social and economic disadvantage. This project will set DBE goals during the procurement process of this project.

To foster economic competitiveness and ensure equity in procurement processes, the City of Chattanooga deployed a Supplier Diversity Program in 2013 and a Minority Business Task Force in 2017. This expands existing education, outreach, and technical support to underprivileged businesses to increase the number of available and certified minority, female, and disadvantaged firms and the number of and dollar amount of purchases with regional DBE firms. This program addresses systemic barriers minority and disadvantaged business owners face in pursuing individual and collective wealth creation and economic participation.

F | STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

F1 Challenge: Aged, Inactive Core Infrastructure Assets Beyond Useful Life

The CHATT's two primary segments will reinvigorate aged infrastructure assets without productive use. The western portion of the trail will be built on a former CSX line that has been inactive for over a decade.

F1 Solution: Repurposing Infrastructure

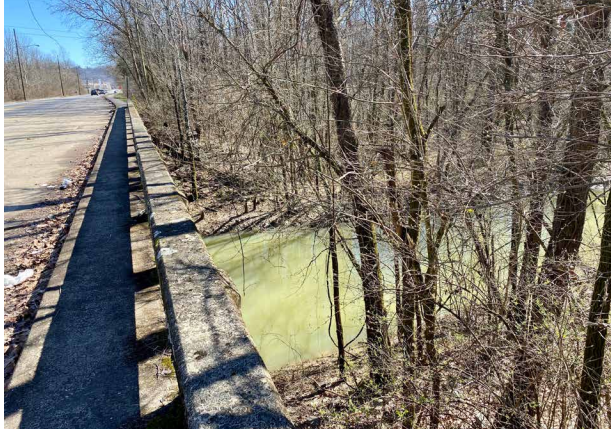
The western portion of the CHATT, the Alton Park Connector, will transform a former CSX rail corridor, reactivating a former transportation corridor that lies derelict, creating a much higher and best use for the aged infrastructure asset. The eastern portion of the CHATT will be built on a portion of a landfill site with limited to no productive current use.

F2 Challenge: A Contaminated Creek and Interstate Block Access between Two Underserved Communities of Color, Creating Major System Vulnerabilities

Currently, residents trying to cross Chattanooga Creek have to travel miles out of their way. If residents travel north in search of a safe way to cross the contaminated creek, they would have to cross under I-24 twice, in a very circuitous route that adds almost 4 miles to the trip, essentially making the northern route unviable for pedestrians. The realistic option is to travel south to try and cross the creek on E 38th St., over a bridge with constrained right-of-way and little capacity for adding adequate sidewalks. This street carries heavy truck traffic across South Chattanooga. The current system exposes vulnerable pedestrians to considerable risk.

F2 Solution: The CHATT Will Safely Cross the Chattanooga Creek and Directly Connect Divided Communities

Travel times will be significantly reduced between the neighborhoods of Alton Park and Clifton Hills while providing safe movement for non-vehicular travel.



The current sidewalk conditions of the only existing connection across Chattanooga Creek between Alton Park and Clifton Hills.

G | PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

This project builds on a strong collaborative partnership of the City of Chattanooga with Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national nonprofit that connects everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors. TPL has expertise across a diverse set of issues, particularly related to supporting disadvantaged communities, including Green Together Pacoima, in Pacoima CA, Bridgeport Waterfront Pathway in Bridgeport, CT, and the India Basin Equitable Development Plan, San Francisco, CA.

Opportunity: The Construction and Maintenance Burdens of the CHATT Will Be Reduced with Careful Design and Clear Maintenance Standards

The City of Chattanooga Department of Parks and Outdoors, which has a track record of managing the Riverwalk and other greenways across the City, will be responsible for maintenance. The precedent in the City of Chattanooga is to produce detailed maintenance requirements for trail upkeep, such as the Specifications for Grounds Maintenance of Riverwalk Extension with over a decade of real maintenance costs. While the exact requirements would not immediately be transferable from the Riverwalk to the CHATT, general expectations would apply to the CHATT, extending the life cycle of the infrastructure asset. In addition, park Operations and Maintenance staff were included in the design process and adjusted the design to simplify maintenance, purposely selecting plants adapted to our local climate, which require little to no maintenance. The City of Chattanooga Department of Public Works will oversee the design and construction and has the experience to manage complex projects and deliver them promptly. With support from local community groups, the CHATT will be programmed and activated by the City of Chattanooga, Parks and Outdoors Department, with decades of experience running the successful Riverwalk.

This project will provide regional and local active transportation connectivity through vital neighborhoods in South Chattanooga and has support from both public and private entities and from local, regional, and national levels.

The vision for the CHATT has been formed out of an understanding of community demographics, and long-term stable relationships with a broad representation of community partners, including those traditionally underserved, who through a wide range of engagement techniques have clearly communicated community wants and needs in a manner that was well documented. The partnership has conducted engagement that aligns with the USDOT's Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making and will continue to do so through the design and construction of this project.

TPL is currently collaborating with community-based organizations, including The BLVD Project, ELLA Library, Net Resource Foundation, and Crabtree Farms, to plan improvements for walking and biking in the Clifton Hills neighborhood. These organizations authentically engage neighbors and advocate for short- and long-term interventions to improve safety of neighbors.

For example, Net Resource Foundation also received TPL's 10MW Partnership Fund. Based in Alton Park, they focus on advocacy of beautification of outdoor spaces and have been instrumental in the development of the vision and concept of the project. Additionally, TPL is building a pilot partnership with Hamilton County Dept. of Education and Chattanooga Department of Parks and Outdoors to create a community schoolyard program ⁽²⁰⁾, building student-designed and neighborhood-informed park spaces at elementary schools. Clifton Hills Elementary is a top priority for this pilot program in the next three years.

Through collaboration on recent regional and urban bicycle, pedestrian, greenway, and downtown plans, the Alton Park Connector and the Clifton Hills Extension, the two segments of the CHATT, have consistently been identified as priorities by all partners and members of the public. These organizations will continue to be an important partner in the design and construction of the project.

Opportunity: The CHATT Represents the Next Chapter for Strong Formal Public-Private Partnership between the Trust for Public Land and the City of Chattanooga

This partnership has a track record for delivering high-quality infrastructure projects that develop economic capacity in underserved communities. In 2022, The City of Chattanooga and Trust for Public Land completed South Chickamauga Creek Greenway, closing a 3-mile gap in four distinct sections. This collaborative effort used a variety of public and private funding sources.

20 <https://www.tpl.org/our-mission/schoolyards>

The Trust for Public Land and the City of Chattanooga have partnered to enhance community features, including adding a resident-designed play space to Southside Community Park, funded in part by L.L. Bean. In addition, TPL purchased the CSX line in 2018 and ceded the land to the City with the intent for the corridor to be developed into a trail. **In total, the TPL, in partnership with the City and other partners, has already invested nearly \$1.16 million in the right-of-way acquisition, feasibility, and design of this project.** The City of Chattanooga has already programmed \$1.2 million for the Alton Park Connector Phase 1, the western terminus of the trail, and a local developer is funding the trail cost for the segment adjacent to the development, Alton Park Connector Phase 2.

PROJECT PARTNERS FOR THE CHATT:

- **City of Chattanooga**
- **Trust for Public Land**
- **List of Trust for Public Land's partners:**
- **Net Resource Foundation**
- **ELLA Library**
- Through a 2018 **EPA Environmental Education Grant**, Trust for Public Land implemented programs in South Chattanooga through five partnering organizations: Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center, Crabtree Farms, Friends of Outdoor Chattanooga, WaterWays, and Lookout Mountain Conservancy. The grant was closed out in 2022.

OTHER PARTNERS

- **The BLVD**, local nonprofit with a capacity building role.
- **Crabtree Farms**, a local nonprofit urban farm and a source of healthy food.
- **Chattanooga Design Studio**, a nonprofit organization working to enhance Chattanooga's quality of life through quality urban design.
- **Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA)**, a transit provider with two bus routes and ADA paratransit service for the area

Local Workforce Development

The South Chattanooga Community Center in Alton Park will house one of the City of Chattanooga Office of Workforce Development’s “talent hubs,” serving as a nexus for employment and educational training and industry-oriented apprenticeship opportunities, as well as hosting local multi-industry hiring events.

In partnership with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga’s Center for Professional Education and the Educational Opportunity Center, Chattanooga State Community College, and the American Job Center, the City’s Office of Workforce Development provides a pipeline to registered academic and career training and apprenticeship programs, targeting low-income communities with high rates of unemployment and low educational attainment. These services will be directly based within Alton Park, as well as other underserved communities, to connect the workforce to local industries and employment opportunities. The Office of Workforce Development will intentionally seek workforce participation opportunities for local South Chattanooga residents in relation to the CHATT project.

The City of Chattanooga partners with community groups representative of historically underrepresented groups to develop workforce strategies. Partnership opportunities will be explored with the City of Chattanooga Office of Workforce Development between Parks and Outdoors and Trust for Public Land.

HI INNOVATION

Innovative Technologies

Pedestrian and cyclist counters, strategically located along the trail, will help track trail usage trends and provide supporting data for additional trail features and amenities in the future. This data will also be actively used in future fundraising efforts with both private and public partners to work towards even greater system connectivity.

To create unique ways to engage residents along the trail route, the Department of Parks and Outdoors will deploy unique design elements along the route that allow for creative use of the trail resource including opportunities for trailside skateboarding elements, and solar-powered, wifi-enabled meeting pods to allow residents and visitors to make outdoor access a part of everyday life.

While micro-mobility (specifically electric scooters and bike share) is not a part of this project funding request, the project itself will be part of a longer bikeway/walkway that would lend itself to use by people using micromobility. Future public bike share stations could be located at Southside Community Park, Crabtree Farms Park, and local businesses.

Innovative Project Delivery

This grant application, along with previous planning and development efforts, brings together an impressive number of local, regional, and state partners including the City of Chattanooga, Trust for Public Land, South Chattanooga Community Association. In particular, the public nonprofit partnership between the Trust for Public Land and the City of Chattanooga successfully built the South Chickamauga Greenway. The City of Chattanooga’s ability to work nimbly with private partnerships such as the Trust for Public Land, speaks to the focus on delivering community-backed projects on schedule.