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# CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER GREENWAY STUDY

FOR THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERLANDS

# PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN





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# INTRODUCTION

## **PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

The Public and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (PSEP) documents the overall schedule and engagement strategy for the Chattahoochee River Greenway Study.

This Public and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (PSEP) has been prepared to:

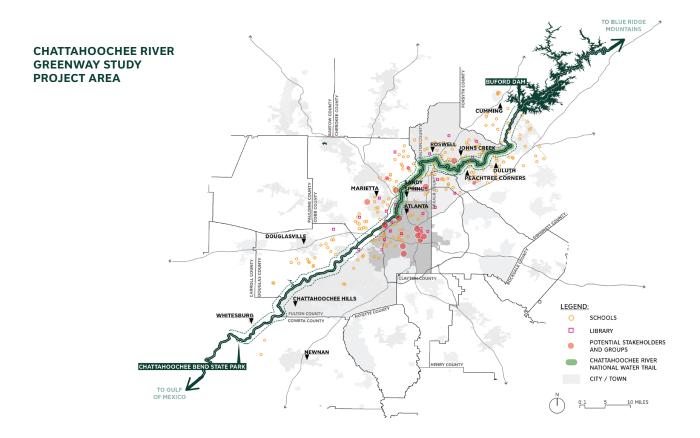
- 1. Establish an overall schedule and engagement strategy for the project.
- 2. Establish various tools to engage target audiences, including adjacent communities, environmental justice communities, environmental and historic preservation groups, property owners, including public sector and private property owners, regional leaders, and future users, including people who may not yet have a relationship with the river.
- 3. Reference existing Chattahoochee Working Group or local outreach efforts.
- **4.** Utilize proven tactics as well as new and innovative outreach tools.
- 5. Recommend strategies for incorporating public feedback into plan development.

## **ELEMENTS OF THE PSEP INCLUDE:**

Project Overview Project Team Project Schedule Engagement Strategy

- Working Groups & Committees
- Types of Events
- Public Outreach Tools

# **PROJECT OVERVIEW**



## **BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

The Chattahoochee River is a shared historic, economic, cultural, and ecological resource of extraordinary value for metropolitan Atlanta. The river traverses the entire Atlanta metropolitan region, forms the boundary of many counties and cities, and provides both recreation and ecological services for communities for 100 miles in the metro area, as well as communities throughout the state.

The Greenway Study will be managed a joint Project Mangagement Team consisting of the Atlanta Regional Commission, the Trust for Public Land, Cobb County, and the City of Atlanta.

Preliminary project aspirations, identified by the Project Management Team, include:

**ENGAGE** a diverse group of people to encounter the river so that all can understand the opportunities and challenges.

**INVITE** all members of the public to experience the river positively.

REDEFINE the Chattahoochee River as a beloved local, regional, and national asset.

**PROTECT** the ecological function of the river and maintain all activities along the river, both current and proposed, build upon a legacy of conservation and protection.

# PROJECT FACT SHEET

## WHY

The **Chattahoochee River Greenway Study** is an opportunity to reconsider the region's relationship to the river and create a new vision for the river's future that will raise public awareness, improve connections and access, indentify potential areas for protection or investment, and build on a legacy of ecological conservation and protection. The story of the River is sometimes hidden, and while beloved and enjoyed by many, **broader engagement** and **redefinition are needed** to position the Chattahoochee as a joyful place to live, work and play for a wider and more diverse community - **a Greenway for all**.

## **WHO**

The Greenway Study will be managed a joint **Project Mangagement Team** consisting of **the Atlanta Regional Commission**, **the Trust for Public Land**, **Cobb County**, and **the City of Atlanta**. The Design Team is led by **SCAPE Landscape Architecture** with collaborators in Transportation & Multi-Modal Trail Design (**Gresham Smith**), Anthropology & History (**New South Associates**), Ecological Design & Planning (**Biohabitats**), Environmental Justice (**Dr. Na'Taki Osborne Jelks**), Communication Design (**GOOD THINKING**), Geography (**Dr. Richard Milligan**) and Environmental Engineering (**Edwards-Pitman**).

## **WHERE**

The River traverses the entire Atlanta metropolitcan region, forms the boundary of many counties and cities, and provides both recreation and ecological services for communities througout the state. The Greenway plan will consider the aspirations outlined above along a **100 mile corridor from Buford Dam to Chattahoochee Bend State Park.** 

## WHAT

This study will involve three distinct elements and two parts: a **greenway plan** that establishes a 100-mile vision and plan for the river corridor, with **expanded details** for catalytic projects along the river; a **pilot project concept** that will develop a concept plan for a 1.5-mile pilot segment and **ongoing engagement with community members.** 

## **HOW**

The Design Team's planning and design process will create a connected corridor that will **engage** people across a broad social spectrum, **protect** and restore native ecologies, **invite** public access and stewardship, and **redefine** social and environmental resiliency in our public spaces.

## **WHEN**

The planning and design process will start in October 2018 and will be completed in the Spring of 2020.

# PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Greenway Study will be managed a joint **Project Mangagement Team** consisting of **the Atlanta Regional Commission**, **the Trust for Public Land**, **Cobb County**, and **the City of Atlanta**.

The **Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)** has a long history of involvement along the Chattahoochee River and will manage the Chattahoochee River Greenway Study administration, participate in plan development, facilitate a regional conversation, and provide oversight and assisstance within the agency's transportation and water planning roles, particularly in the area of stormwater management.

The **Trust for Public Land (TPL)**'s Georgia Office administers the Chattahoochee "Riverlands" Campaign as a long-term effort to establish a green corridor along the river from the North Georgia Mountains to Columbus, Georgia. Over the years TPL has partnered with various agencies to protect natural habitat along the river and provide opportunities for people to interact with the land. The TPL staff will provide a corridor-wide perspective and will work with the planning team to develop the Chattahoochee River Greenway Study.

Cobb County has made trail construction a top local priority, including a county Greenways and Trails Master Plan that proposes several trails along and near the Chattahoochee River. Currently Cobb County has over 85 miles of greenway trails and side path trails. Cobb staff will participate in the Chattahoochee River Greenway Study development as well as guide a pilot project implementation phase along existing county-owned property and connected to a trail head project on Mableton Parkway and to the Riverview waterfront mixed-use development in Smyrna.

The **City of Atlanta** is the largest city located along the Chattahoochee River. In 2017 the Department of City Planning (DCP) released *The Atlanta City Design: Aspiring to the Beloved Community* as a guiding vision for the design of the city. The book details Atlanta's identity in terms of five core values – equity, progress, ambition, access, and nature – and includes ambitious proposals for the design of a future Atlanta. Those design proposals include a new Chattahoochee River park. The DCP staff will work with the project team to advance the Chattahoochee River Greenway Study as an important element of the second phase of Atlanta City Design within a comprehensive regional context. Additionally, this study is being considered as an opportunity to expand the work begun with in DCP's Urban Ecology Framework.

## POINT OF CONTACT

**Byron Rushing, ARC** brushing@atlantaregional.org

# **DESIGN TEAM**

The design team is led by SCAPE Landscape Architecture, a nationally recognized, award-winning design firm, founded by Kate Orff, the first landscape architect to be honored with the MacArthur foundation's 'Genius Grant.' SCAPE is known for visionary work that unites ecosystems and social environments through the design of regenerative living infrastructure and new forms of public space. Here, along the Chattahoochee, we aim to apply and evolve this expertise with a committed set of partners and stakeholders to build a new identity and spatial framework for the lands along the Chattahoochee River.

Gresham Smith is a key member of the team, has years of proven collaborative design/engineering experience with SCAPE, and is the team's primary local presence in Atlanta. Gresham Smith bring extensive experience in transportation design and engineering to ensure a seamless transition between visionary thinking and implementable design. Through many projects, including the Greenways and Trails Master Plan with Cobb County, Gresham Smith have developed have invaluable local connections, resources, and relationships that will enrich the process.

**Biohabitats brings a deep understanding of Atlanta's bioregion** through their work on the **Atlanta Urban Ecology Framework**, one of the first comprehensive urban ecology strategies in the country. They will provide a science-driven approach to assessing ecological conditions and will identify conservation and restoration opportunities that ensure a functional urban ecosystem over generations.

The Chattahoochee is also a social ecosystem, connecting diverse communities while revealing environmental justice and equity issues along its path. **Dr. Na'taki Osborne Jelks** and **Dr. Richard Milligan** are academics deeply embedded in some of the most vulnerable communities along the Chattahoochee and will make sure the planning process employs tools and techniques that provide a meaningful platform for identifying, listening, and responding to the many voices along the river.

**Good Thinking, New South Associates,** and **Edwards-Pitman** round out the core team with their innovative capabilities in photo and video journalism, narrative writing and graphic design, historic and cultural resources preservation, surveying and permitting experience, and established relationships with local municipalities.

## POINTS OF CONTACT

**Chris Barnes, SCAPE Nans Voron, SCAPE** 

**Project Email Address:** 

chat tahoo cheer iver study @scape studio.com

# PROJECT SCHEDULE

# **GREENWAY PLAN** CONCEPTUAL PUBLIC 8 STAKEHOLDER TASK 2 EXISTING LITERATURE 8 CONDITIONS ANALYSIS TASK 6 DEC ΙΔΝ CORRIDOR VISION & CONCEPT TASK 3 MAR APR MAY TAS JUN GREENWAY PLAN DEVELOPMENT AUG SEP OCT NOV TASK 5 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES JAN FEB хЗ MAR APR MAY Pilot Site Specific

\*The duration and dates of these events is subject to change.

## TASK 2 - 5: THE GREENWAY PLAN

Task 2 will kick-off the project with an existing conditions analysis. In Task 3, the project team will synthesize an identity for the Chattahoochee River Greenway by using visioning, collaborative input, community response, and co-design sessions along the 100 mile corridor. In Task 4, the project team will create a corridor plan with designs and plans for specific elements of the corridor including connections, alignments and access points, regulatory and development frameworks, and conservation planning. In Task 5, the project team will work with stakeholders to identify fundable and implementable catalytic projects at the conclusion of the Chattahoochee River Greenway Study and identify potential partners that can implement priority projects.

## **TASK 6: PILOT PROJECT**

The project team will develop a pilot project segment along a length of the Chattahoochee River in Cobb County. The team will develop a conceptual layout and typical sections for a greenway trail segment between Mableton Parkway and Veterans Memorial Highway, with access points and overlooks.

## **TASK 7: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Ongoing public engagement will set expectations for the Greenway Plan, generate useful ideas and concepts that impact the design, be organized to maximize participation, employ a variety of activity types, and provide a digital platform for engagement and feedback of a wider group of users.

## LEGEND

- CHATTAHOOCHEE WORKING GROUP MEETING
- SUB-AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS
  (TO BE IDENTIFIED IN TASK 2)
- PUBLIC FORUM
  (WITH SAC , LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS +
  COMMUNITY MEMBERS)
- DESIGN CHARRETTES
  (WITH SAC + LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS)
- FINAL TASK PRESENTATION (WITH THE CWG)
- WINDSHIELD DRIVING TOUR
- RIVER RAMBLES (OPEN TO THE PUBLIC)

# **ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

## **OVERVIEW**

The Chattahoochee River Greenway Study engagement strategy is meant to both invite new participants to the table and to build upon the strong and engaged communities already working along the River. The team will take special care to engage, listen and respond to traditionally underserved and disenfranchised communities. Engagement will set expectations for the Greenway Plan, generate useful ideas and concepts that impact the design, be organized to maximize participation, employ a variety of activity types, and provide a digital platform for engagement and feedback of a wider group of users.

## **WORKING GROUPS, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**



The **Chattahoochee Working Group** is an evolving stakeholder group convened to engage with each other on Chattahoochee-related topics. It is hoped that municipalities, counties, congressional districts, and non-profit organizations who have a mission focused on the Chattahoochee River can meet on a regular basis to better understand stakeholder agendas and initiatives.



The corridor will be divided into smaller Sub-Area Committees (SACs), as identified based on jurisdictional boundaries, land use character areas, environmental or topographical constraints, or other factors that will influence plan implementation. The SACs will serve as focus groups for the sub areas and will meet regularly to give feedback and participate in charrettes.



In addition to SACs, the design team will hold public forums and design charrettes with a larger group of Local Stakeholders in each sub-area. Local Stakeholders could include smaller land owners, non-profits, local representatives, local agencies, etc.



Community Members are participants from the public who engage with the project, participating in River Rambles and Public Forums.

## TYPES OF EVENTS



The full design team will conduct a multi-day "Windshield Driving Tour" along the banks of the full 100 mile river corridor. The team will conduct on-the-ground site explorations, photography and video documentation. The design team will engage with the community and interview stakeholders as face-to-face research that informs the project and forges an authentic identity for the Chattahoochee River Greenway.



To engage the broadest possible constituenty, engagement must be fun. The Design Team will work with local non-profit community groups to organize unique participatory events at the river, named "River Rambles," where the team will advance storytelling and immersive experiences that build participation in the Greenway planning process.



Design Charrettes are a participatory design method for guided problem solving. This is an opportunity to empower stakeholders as active participants in the design process and they allow the Design Team to listen and respond to the needs and desires of locals.



Public Forums are designed to be informational and accessible with science-fair style stations led collaboratively by members of the SAC and the Design Team. These events are open to all members of the public.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH TOOLS**



The Chattahoochee Greenway Community Portal provides visitors exciting and compelling insight into the master plan to bring to all area residents greater access to and deeper understanding of the river's wealth of social, ecological and recreational assets and uses.



A kit of materials developed for "Meetings-on-the-Go" could include maps, physical models, pamphlets and other items that can be used for tabling at neighborhood events and kept by members of the Project Management Team for future community engagement work related to the Greenway.



Additional Promotional and Educational Materials will engage a broader audience and can be used in conjunction with the kit of materials developed for "Meetings-on-the-Go" as outreach materials.

# CHATTAHOOCHEE WORKING GROUP (CWG)



## **OVERVIEW**

The **Chattahoochee Working Group** is an evolving stakeholder group convened to engage with each other on Chattahoochee-related topics. Municipalities, counties, congressional districts, and non-profit organizations who have a mission focused on the Chattahoochee River can meet on a regular basis to better understand stakeholder agendas and initiatives. It is anticipated that this group will strengthen the project's collective impact. As member organizations initiate projects or launch advocacy efforts, this platform will be a space to disseminate information, gather input, and identify partnerships. The inaugural meeting was held on Tuesday, April 24, 2018.

## **CURRENT MEMBERS\***

## **NON - PROFITS**

The Aimee Copeland Foundation American Rivers Atlanta Audubon Society Atlanta Cycling Carroll Tomorrow & Carroll Co. Chamber Chattahoochee NOW Chattahoochee Parks Conservancy Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Chattahoochee Nature Center Cumberland CID Cumming Forsyth Chamber of Commerce Friends of McIntosh Preserve Friends of the River GA River Network

GA Tools for Life Groundwork Atlanta Let's Go Fishing, Inc Sandy Springs Conservancy Riverwalk Atlanta The Trust For Public Land

## REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Atlanta Regional Commission Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce

## **STATE AGENCIES**

Sweetwater Creek Park Hartfield's Hikers, OPALS (Older People with Active Lifestyles), Atlanta African American Adventures DNR State Parks

## FEDERAL AGENCIES

National Parks (CRNRA)

# CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

GA06, District Office

## LAND OWNERS

Georgia Power

### **CITIES**

City of Atlanta City of Chattahoochee Hills City of Roswell City of Sandy Springs City of Suwanee

## COUNTIES

Carroll County
Cobb County DOT
Cobb County Parks
Coweta County
Douglas County
Gwinnett County
Fulton County
Forsyth County
Heard County

\*members as of March, 2019

## **ROLE**

This Working Group is where stakeholders will both inform the design team about collective goals, needs, wants – and where the design team can gather input about possible proposals. The Working Group is to act as a Steering Committee for the master planning process.

## **ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

As member organizations initiate projects or launch advocacy efforts, this platform will be an excellent space to disseminate information, gather input, and identify partnerships. The Design Team will meet with the CWG on a regular basis to give feedback at draft and final stages, as well as participate in two (2) design charrettes.

# SUB-AREA COMMITTEES (SACs)

## **OVERVIEW**

The corridor will be divided into three (3) smaller **Sub-Area Committees (SACs)** based on jurisdictional boundaries, land use character areas, environmental or topographical constraints, or other factors that will influence plan implementation. The design team will develop direct relationships with representatives from various agencies, local businesses, institutions, schools, and community-based organizations to better understand their needs and wants for each segment of the river. Each SAC will serve as a focus group for the identified sub area.

## **ROLE**

Engagement with the SACs will set expectations for the Greenway Plan, generate useful ideas and concepts that impact the design and provide advice on outreach efforts.

## **ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

SAC meetings will be organized to maximize participation and will employ a variety of meeting types (including face-to-face sessions, open forums, and guided charrettes). Engagement will be documented and shared on the community portal, with clear project reporting and summaries of messages received during past events and how these comments influenced the design evolution.

## **MEETINGS AND TIMELINE**

The SACs will meet regularly to give feedback at both draft and final stages of the Greenway Plan and Pilot Project. The Greenway Plan will be developed in conjunction with the SACs including up to three (3) SAC Meetings, two (2) design charrettes and three (3) Public Forums. The Pilot Project will be developed with the coordinating SAC with up to two (2) Public Forums and one (1) Design Charrette. There will also be opportunities to engage a broader public with up to three (3) River Rambles and access to the online Community Portal.



# **LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS**



## **OVERVIEW**

The Design Team will hold Public Forums and Design Charrettes with a larger group of **Local Stakeholders** in each sub-area. Local Stakeholders will be identified by the SACs and CWG to create a broad and diverse constituency specific to each sub-area.

## **WHO**

Local Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, teachers, private land-owners, local representatives, and community leaders that cannot commit to regular SAC meetings.

## **WHEN**

Engagement with Local Stakeholders will include two (2) Design Charrettes, three (3) Public Forums and three (3) River Rambles. Engagement will be documented and shared on the community portal, with clear project reporting and summaries of messages received during past events and how these comments influenced the design evolution. The Design Team will also maintain an open line of communication to allow for ongoing participation between Local Stakeholders and the project.



**Community Members** are participants from the public who engage with the project, participating in River Rambles and Public Forums. The Design Team will work with Community Members to both provide information about the project and to hear from the Community Members about concerns, needs, and local knowledge of the Chattahoochee River.

## **WHO**

Community Members includes the general public, residents of the watershed, and those affected by the Greenway Study process and future plans.

## **WHEN**

Engagement with Community Members will include three (3) fun and immersive River Rambles on the Chattahoochee, three (3) Public Forums within each sub-area and two (2) Public Forums for people living nearby the Pilot Project site. Engagement will also take place online through the Community Portal and after the project ends with "Meetings-on-the-Go."

# WINDSHIELD DRIVING TOUR



## **OVERVIEW**

The full design team will participate in a "Windshield Driving Tour" - a multi-day driving tour along the banks of the full 100 mile river corridor. The tour will allow the Design Team to ground truth GIS data with on-the-ground site explorations, photography and video documentation. The design team will engage with the community and interview stakeholders on the river itself as **face-to-face research** that informs the project and forges an authentic identity for the Chattahoochee River Greenway.

## **PURPOSE**

The Windshield Driving Tour will begin to engage community members, local businesses, schools, agencies, and institutions in each Sub-Area Committee along the Chattahoochee River. The Design Team will gather information from each Sub-Area regarding individual concerns, issues and opportunities for connectivity.

## **WHERE**

The Windshield Driving Tour will extend from Buford Dam to Chattahoochee Bend State Park.

## **WHEN**

The multi-day tour will take place during Task 2 - Literature Reiew & Existing Conditions Analysis.





To engage the broadest possible constituents, engagement must be fun. We propose up to three unique participatory events at the river's edge, called "River Rambles," where the team will advance storytelling and immersive experiences that provide meaningful opportunities for the public to shape the Greenway planning process.

## **PURPOSE**

The River Rambles are meant to create a broad constituency for the Chattahoochee River and be inclusive of a general public. This event type is designed to engage a spectrum of people, including people who may not yet have a relationship with the river.

## **WHO**

The River Rambles are open and accessible to all and will be advertised widely. It is anticipated that up to two of the River Rambles will be stand-alone events fully organized by the design team in coordination with the CWG and the Project Management Team, and the remaining River Ramble will be activities that build off established and/or pre-existing river events.

## **WHEN**

There will be up to three (3) River Rambles throughout the Study.



**Design Charrettes** are a participatory design method for guided problem solving. They are interactive and provide opportunities for SACs, Local Stakeholders and the Design Team to collaborate and work together - brainstorming ideas and potential solutions.

## **PURPOSE**

Design Charrettes are an opportunity to offer members of the Sub-Area Committees and Local Stakeholders as active participants in the design process. Holding Design Charrettes early in the planning process allows the Design Team to listen and respond to the needs and desires of locals in each Sub-Area before moving forward.

## **WHO**

The Design Charrettes are held within each Sub-Area and Pilot Project Area and include members of the SACs and Local Stakeholders as identified by the SAC and the CWG.

## **WHEN**

The Greenway Plan will include two (2) Design Charrettes per sub-area, up to six (6) in total. The Charrettes will be used to kick-off Tasks 3 and 4 of the Greenway Plan. The Pilot Project Plan will include one (1) Design Charrette.



**Public Forums** are designed to be informational and accessible meetings with science-fair style stations led by the Design Team and members of the SAC. These events are open to all members of the public.

## **PURPOSE**

Public Forums are a chance for the Design Team inform the public on project status and goals, and to create an accessible platform for two-way communication including hearing concerns from impacted community members. Public Forums also allow the SAC to become champions of the Greenway, directing and facilitating conversations with Community Members.

## **WHO**

Public Forums are meant to be inclusive, accessible and open to the general public, residents of the watershed and those impacted by the Greenway Study process and future plans. This event type is designed to engage a broad spectrum of people, including people who may not yet have a relationship with the river.

## **WHEN**

There will be three (3) Public Forums within each sub-area along the Chattahoochee and two (2) additional Public Forums directly relating to the Pilot Project and adjacent communities.

# CHATTAHOOCHEE GREENWAY COMMUNITY PORTAL



## **OVERVIEW**

The Chattahoochee Greenway Community Portal provides visitors exciting and compelling insight into the master plan to bring to all area residents greater access to and deeper understanding of the river's wealth of social, ecological and recreational assets and uses. The Good Thinking Team will accomplish this by designing, building, and maintaining an online experience that shares timely news and information on the research, planning, and design of this master plan through documentary features, that include editorial, video, photography, as well as publication of key documents and events.

## **PURPOSE**

The goal of the community portal is to provide timely news and project updates on the Chattahoochee Greenway Project as well as provide a means for interaction with the planning process and Design Team. The online portal will be consistent with Promotional and Educational Materials to inform community members of opprotunities to participate in project related events like the River Rambles or Public Forums. The online portal will also link to social media accounts and external websites for CWG members. Materials posted on social media platforms could use the following tags: #ChattahoocheeRiverlands #ChattahoocheeRiver #ChattahoocheeGreenway #AtlantaRegionalCommission @TrustForPublicLand @CityOfAtlanta @Scape Studio @Biohabitats @Gresham Smith @GoodThinkingAtlanta @NewSouthAssoc

## **WHO**

The digital platform will be accessible to all. This platform is designed to engage a broad spectrum of people, including people who may not yet have a relationship with the river. This communication tool will serve as the cornerstone of the engagement plan, supplemented with alternative outreach to communities without telephone or internet access.

## **WHEN**

The website will feature two stories per month after launch. Recurring updates available through the website will include accessible content such as project design drawings, photography, design narratives, recorded and transcribed citizen interviews, school lessons, and summaries of community engagement activities, meetings, and River Rambles.



## **PURPOSE**

A kit of materials developed for "Meetings-on-the-Go" could include maps, physical models, pamphlets and other items that can be used for tabling at neighborhood events and future community engagement work related to the Greenway. The Design Team will assemble the materials that can be used by the Project Management Team, depending on availability, by members of the Chattahoochee Working Group and Local Stakeholders in each Sub-Area to share, communicate, and solicit input about the project over the course of the study. They could be used not just at tabling events and community festivals, but by neighborhood groups, churches, etc.

# PROMOTIONAL + EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS



## **PURPOSE**

**Promotional and Educational Materials** will engage a broad audience and can be used in conjunction with the kit of materials developed for "Meetings-on-the-Go." Promotional and Educational Materials are developed by the Design Team and are available to the general public. They may be available on the website as educational materials about the project. The PMT, CWG, SACs and Local Stakeholders will help distribute these material through their channels to help engage a larger constituency. These materials will also be used to inform community members of opprotunities to participate in project related events like the River Rambles or Public Forums.

