



**Public-Private Partnership
Funding for Infrastructure in
Valdosta and Lowndes County**



**Valdosta-Lowndes
Metropolitan Planning
Organization**

Public Private Partnership Funding Report for Valdosta and Lowndes County

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I. Introduction

Within metropolitan Valdosta, the Azalea City Trail (ACT) and other facilities allow citizens and visitors alike to traverse the city in a multimodal manner. In addition, people can exercise and enjoy green space in an urban setting. There are, however, ways to improve what our community offers. Ideas, such as a trail network or enhanced green space or bike and pedestrian infrastructure, are aspirations that would be a welcomed addition to the community, but like any project proposal, there are a multitude of concerns voiced by elected officials and interested citizens. One particular inquiry that may arise from infrastructure projects is what are plausible funding sources?

Funding may or may not be readily available from local, state, or federal tax revenues and grants, and this could present a significant hurdle in a project coming to fruition. Other sources of funding may include private donations, bonds, or impact investment funding, among others. Public private partnerships, or PPPs, should be explored by civic leaders. This requires having a steadfast association with local businesses and industries as they could provide essential financing and a special knowledge that would benefit the proposed project and the community. A common example would be partnering with a local bicycle shop to install bicycle parking in a community park or downtown alley. Crowdfunding is another avenue of fundraising that will be discussed in this document. Georgia has approved enabling legislation that allows for local governments to establish a process in advertising applications for PPPs and reviewing them. Infrastructure PPPs are especially useful in communities that have

attained metropolitan status because of the larger service base.

According to the 2015 United States Census Population Estimate, Lowndes County is home to approximately 112,865 people, which is among the largest in southern Georgia. The city of Valdosta is home to 55,724 individuals based on 2015 Census estimates¹. In addition to Valdosta, other communities in Lowndes County include the cities of Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Dasher. In 2010, the population density for Lowndes County was approximately 220.2 people per square mile. Meanwhile, the average density within the city of Valdosta was nearly seven times this amount at 1,521.7 people per square mile².

Population growth and high population density are key indicators in establishing a need for excellent public services and improving existing ones. Valdosta is home to Moody AFB, Valdosta State University (VSU), two public school systems, and a regional medical center. These community entities, along with regional tourist attractions, bring many visitors to Valdosta and Lowndes County and keep residents engaged with the community while stimulating economic development.

This document outlines the purpose of PPPs and their application to infrastructure projects that promote higher walkability, bike-friendliness, and personal fitness. This report will illustrate through applications and examples why Valdosta and Lowndes County should pursue PPP funding to continue augmenting the community with exceptional bicycle/pedestrian and recreation facilities. Mutual benefits to the

¹ American FactFinder, U.S. Census Bureau. 5 Year Valdosta Population estimates

² American Fact Finder. 2010 U.S. Census.

sponsor and community is a stressed goal throughout this report. This document will maintain consistency with visions, ideas, and goals described in local planning documents such as the 2016 Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan, 2015 Valdosta State University Master Plan, Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO or MPO) 2040 Transportation Vision Plan, Valdosta-Lowndes Parks & Recreation Master Plan, and Greater Lowndes County Common Community Vision along with local, state, and federal regulations. Related MPO documents will serve as key references throughout the narrative of this report.

II. What are PPPs and Why Should they be Utilized?

If something is universally true based on general microeconomics, it is that resources are becoming increasingly scarce. There is certainly no exception to this logic in the realm of finance. PPPs, or P3s, are becoming a popular source of funding for projects that benefit the public. While the United States is still developing a competitive PPP market compared to the likes of Canada and Australia, the trends are shifting in the right direction.³

Traditionally, the U.S. has had a large municipal bond market and high credit rating, which has made PPPs for infrastructure less of a priority for many local and state governments until recent years. As many municipalities and governments combat budget problems stemming from economic downturn and a shrinking tax base, private sources of funding have become an attractive practice to complete a public project. According to the Urban Land Institute, approximately \$75 billion were invested into PPPs across the nation in 2004⁴.

Before the components to a PPP are outlined, it is vital to establish a definition for this innovative arrangement. The following definition from the World Bank Group seems to best capture the scope of an average PPP:

³ Public-private partnerships and the global infrastructure challenge. *Ernst & Young*, 2015. <http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-public-private-partnerships-and-the-global/%24FILE/EY-public-private-partnerships-and-the-global.pdf>

⁴ Ten Principles for Successful Public-Private Partnerships. *Urban Land Institute*, 2005. http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/2005/01/TP_Partnerships.pdf

“A public-private partnership (PPP) is a long-term contract between a private party and a government entity, for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility, and remuneration is linked to performance.”

– World Bank Group⁵

Not only is funding an argument for the institution of more infrastructure PPPs in Valdosta and Lowndes County, but the expertise of the private sector should not be taken lightly, either. Existing nonprofit companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, and businesses may benefit a project from their intellectual input on design, planning, financing, constructing, and operating a piece of infrastructure. PPPs may also have a philanthropic angle by allowing the acceptance of private donations, which may be a key funding ingredient. Donations of any kind should be used in a manner that is consistent with the benefactor’s desires. Philanthropy and other potential PPP funding sources will be elaborated upon further in Section IV.

The National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) has outlined four different categories of infrastructure PPPs depending on the amount of activity that the private partner is in charge of overseeing as spelled out in the contract with the public agency or government⁶. Design-Build is the most common

⁵ <https://pppknowledgelab.org/ppp-cycle/what-ppp>

⁶ A Guide to Public-Private Partnerships. *National Institute of Governmental Purchasing*, 2015. [https://www.nigp.org/docs/default-source/New-Site/research-reports/guidetopublic-privatepartnerships\(ppps\)-whatpublicprocurementspecialistsneednowfinal.pdf?sfvrsn=4](https://www.nigp.org/docs/default-source/New-Site/research-reports/guidetopublic-privatepartnerships(ppps)-whatpublicprocurementspecialistsneednowfinal.pdf?sfvrsn=4)

form of PPP. They increase in complexity and are labeled as the following:

1. Design-Build PPP
2. Design-Build-Operate-Maintain
3. Design-Build-Finance
4. Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain

As with any relationship, it is important that trust be established and maintained throughout the span of the partnership. Trust, first and foremost, begins with the involved parties, but it extends to the general public or those who will regularly use the infrastructure that the PPP will advance. PPPs should foster an atmosphere of transparency for all involved parties and the general public⁷. Trust ensures that the sponsorship is mutually beneficial for the public and private sector organizations that are contractually involved in the infrastructure project⁸. These benefits range from attracting new industry, job growth, and tourism to better quality of life among citizens and a memorable experience by visitors.

Environmental friendliness should be a significant stipulation in the development of a PPP. Infrastructure that meets sustainability certification requirements is one of many current ambitions and funding trends nationwide, and Valdosta should be setting the example for the southern Georgia region in this aspect of development⁹. This is also one of many facets of good public relations in outlining

⁷ <https://pppknowledgelab.org/ppp-cycle/how-ppps-can-help>

⁸ See Footnote 6, page 1.

⁹ Public-private partnerships lead the way in sustainable design/build developments. *San Diego Daily Transcript*, 2008. <http://www.rjcarchitects.com/News/06-12-08--It-Takes-a-Village.pdf>

PPPs and instituting a culture of sustainability in Valdosta and Lowndes County.

The reasons for attracting PPPs to the Valdosta and Lowndes County area are chronicled by numerous policies in multiple planning documents sponsored by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) and the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO) and adopted by the local city and county governments. In the 2016 Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan, there are ten community goals on page 11 that introduce the planning elements of the document. Of these ten, at least seven are applicable in the scope of this report, and they are as follows¹⁰:

Goal 1 - Economic Development

Goal 3 - Community Wellness

Goal 6 - Natural Resources

Goal 7 - Cultural Resources

Goal 8 - Transportation

Goal 9 - Community Facilities and Services

Goal 10 - Intergovernmental Coordination

Within these seven goals are Issues, Policies and Opportunities that this report will attempt to address. A tailored list of these issues and objectives related to infrastructure and mobility is included in Appendices A-G. Issue 1.8 under Goal 1 states that the community “lacks an established investment network, resulting in a lack of access to capital.” Adjoining to this issue is Policy 1.8.4 which encourages the

¹⁰ 2016 Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan.
<http://www.sgrc.us/community-and-economic-development.html>

development of public-private partnerships in investment capital. If applied properly, an infrastructure PPP network can mitigate this particular issue and policy. Opportunities 8.4 and 10.9 in the Comprehensive Plan recognize public and private partnerships as a method to overcome challenges in the above goals, and this is a fitting way to continue the flow of the PPP discussion as it pertains to local planning documents and their accompanying policies.

Since the primary focus of this report is transportation infrastructure that encourages greater mobility, it is important to address the connections with the 2040 Transportation Vision Plan (TVP) that was published by SGRC in September 2015¹¹. Within this document are Common Community Vision (CCV) Aspirational Goals and Transportation Objectives that relate to transportation challenges and how to overcome them. Applicable items relating to infrastructure PPPs are listed below:

Goal 1 - Support Regional Economic Engines and Public/Private Collaboration through Accessible, Multi-modal Transportation Systems for the Movement of People and Goods.

Goal 7 - Promote Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyles Throughout the Community by Implementing Transportation Strategies of Livable Communities that Promote an Active, Healthy Lifestyle.

Goal 17 - Develop Public/Private Partnerships to Preserve and Promote Historic and Cultural Resources through Developing Transportation Projects that are Context Sensitive to Historic Resources.

¹¹ 2040 Transportation Vision Plan.
<http://www.sgrc.us/transportation-plans.html>

Additionally, Page 33 of the TVP includes language on drafting model ordinances that “encourage private investment in transportation infrastructure.”

The Downtown Valdosta Master Plan is another local planning document that outlines the need for private sector involvement in the improvement of the city’s downtown district. The most direct principle that can be tied to this report is Implementation Principle 2, which addresses “Leveraging Private Sector Involvement” while implementing the various components of the plan¹². These range from sponsoring a bench alongside a pedestrian walkway to incorporating more greenspace while preserving the historic integrity of the city’s downtown blocks.

The 2013 version of the Valdosta-Lowndes Parks and Recreation Master Plan covers information on how to improve the agency through the establishment of “beneficial partnerships.” This is labeled as a Tier 1 Priority for VLRPA in the next decade. Page 6.4 of this document elaborates on greenways and how they provide a safe mode of transportation and are designed to fulfill an aesthetic purpose.¹³

The Greater Lowndes County Common Community Vision (CCV) is the document that provides an overarching summary of the various aspects of planning that will be addressed through PPPs. The following vision statement is comprehensive and illustrates what the Lowndes County community is when first-class

opportunities and infrastructure, among other things, are available to residents and visitors:

Common Community Vision Statement

“A resilient community where partnerships and coordination promote regional success in economic development, education, infrastructure, and a high quality of life.”

One avenue towards the achievement of this depiction is the exploration of PPPs and the potential associated with them.

Overall, if utilized appropriately, PPPs will help the Valdosta and Lowndes community achieve a higher quality of life for its residents and build upon the existing highlights of the tourism industry. Developing a network of public and private partners in this area is quite ambitious, given the rural demographics, but it is not unachievable since there are already so many inputs geared towards recruiting more opportunity. Proper planning, communication, and coordination are essential for instituting this practice of mutually beneficial public-private sponsorship in the Valdosta area.

¹² Downtown Valdosta Master Plan.
<http://valdostamainstreet.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Valdosta-Downtown-Master-Plan.pdf>

¹³ 2013 VLRPA Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

III. Bicycle and Pedestrian Case Studies

Now that the basic groundwork for public and private partnerships with respect to local policy and vision is established, it is appropriate to explore existing infrastructure and where PPPs should be applied in the community with respect to bicyclists and pedestrians. The diverse economic engines of the Lowndes County region attract many individuals of a young demographic, and unlike older generations, this group habitually uses multiple modes of transportation instead of exclusively automobiles. As a college town that is home to thousands of young families, the community should be a place that provides many opportunities for mobility both within and between neighborhoods and their activity centers. PPPs can be formed to build safer multimodal transportation options in Valdosta.

The Comprehensive Plan referenced a low walkability score from walkscore.com (see Appendix B). The algorithm takes into account the availability of bike lanes on existing city streets, and based on the score of 30 out of 100 possible points, the current standing of the community is not encouraging. While the current result falls short, there are opportunities abound to confront this. Infrastructure PPPs geared towards bicycling and pedestrian walkability are an option. Policy 7.1 in Appendix F stipulates that “walking, biking, and public transit should be considered viable and sustainable forms of transportation supported through appropriate land use and infrastructure decisions.”

The document that specifically addresses the current status of cycling and walking infrastructure in the community and how it can

be strengthened is the Valdosta-Lowndes Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan (Bike/Ped Plan) adopted by the local governments in 2007¹⁴. Within this plan, pages 30 and 31 expound upon the creative funding sources that are available for promoting and participating in Safe Routes to School and other local and national bike/pedestrian causes. It is important to reiterate that private sources of funding will likely not cover 100% of an infrastructure project, and it is best to expect the need to supplement or match public funds.

The Bike/Ped Plan also discusses design standards and the type of structures that make an urban environment more conducive to the public. These structures must cover the qualifications set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and related signage generally must comply with the Manual of Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in addition to Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) rules and guidelines. More discussion of these structures and how PPPs can be used to install them will be addressed throughout this section of the report. The League of American Bicyclists published a list of characteristics that a bicycle-themed project should exhibit affectionately known as “The 5 Es” including Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation & Planning¹⁵. These ensure safety and maximum benefits regarding mobility and enjoyment of a landscape. PPPs could be applied to any of these five characteristics in developing a project vision that promotes safety and design, simultaneously.

¹⁴ Valdosta-Lowndes Bike and Pedestrian Plan. <http://www.sgrc.us/bike---ped-planning.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.bikeleague.org/content/5-es>

A. Benefits of Investment

Bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure has a vast amount of benefits to individuals that utilize available safe infrastructure and the communities and businesses that take part in maintaining them. First, bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure could attract tourism to Valdosta and Lowndes County along with the entire southern Georgia region. Nationally, bicycling contributes \$133 billion to the United States economy¹⁶ with approximately \$11.3 billion of that amount collectively benefiting South Atlantic states like Georgia¹⁷. Investing in bicycle lanes for existing transportation arteries and greenway trails also promotes local business, retail, restaurants and industries. Trails and greenways also increase property values for homes and revenues for local government agencies that are adjacent or nearby. The Silver Comet Trail in northwest Georgia, for example, caused a 4% increase in home values for those properties that are located within a quarter mile of the trail.¹⁸

These are benefits alongside Lowndes County's connectivity to Interstate 75, U.S. Highways 41, 84, and 221, and State Routes 7,31,38, 94,122, 125, 133 135, and 376. Since this plethora of highways draws visitors and shoppers to the Valdosta and Lowndes area, it is appropriate to mention sidewalks as a feature that investment should be directed towards by both public and private entities. There are many locations in the

community, including along state highways, that contain sidewalk gaps or are underserved entirely by sidewalks, and some are in front of hotels and adjacent restaurants. The development of sidewalks by businesses between food establishments and lodging should be incentivized in the Valdosta community. This could perhaps be through a business tax break, provided that the business properly coordinates with right-of-way (ROW) owners to construct a sidewalk.

Investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure will improve public and environmental health. The effects of such infrastructure are a heavily researched topic and have yielded favorable findings and results. Promoting multimodal transportation and mobility in a community will lower greenhouse gas emissions, reduce traffic congestion, and improve cardiovascular health.¹⁹ SGRC and Valdosta State University recently published a joint research study on the state of cardiovascular health in southern Georgia. According to this study, there is a positive correlation between poor cardiovascular health and sedentary lifestyles, and this is especially true in the southeast United States.²⁰ Better transportation planning that promotes neighborhood connectivity and physical activity along with multimodal infrastructure investment will alleviate some of these health problems.

¹⁶ <https://www.adventurecycling.org/routes-and-maps/us-bicycle-route-system/benefits-and-building-support/economic-impact/>

¹⁷ The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy. *Outdoor Industry Foundation*, 2006. <http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchCreationEconomyBicycling.pdf>

¹⁸ Silver Comet Trail Master Plan. http://www.bwnwga.org/wp-content/uploads/Silver_Comet_Combined.pdf

¹⁹ http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/data/factsheet_environmental.cfm

²⁰ An Assessment of Transportation Planning and Community Health in South-Central Georgia. *SGRC and VSU*, July 2016. <http://www.sgrc.us/bike---ped-planning.html>

B. Road Bicycling

1. Travel Lanes

The most common road feature that promotes bicycle suitability is a bike lane, which can either be protected or non-protected. Sustella Avenue in Valdosta is an example of a road with a non-protected bicycle lane. A “sharrow”, or shared roadway, has no defined separation between vehicular and bicycle traffic but contains paintings and signage telling drivers to watch for bicyclists and to share the road. Roadways with wide shoulders separated by a rumble strip exist in the area but are not the best option for cyclists because of heavy truck traffic.



Bike Lane along Sustella Avenue
Source: Andrew Smith, SGRC



“Sharrow” in southern Georgia
Source: Corey Hull, SGRC



Shoulder Bike Lane with Rumble Strip
Source: Corey Hull, SGRC

Protected bike lanes are supplemented with either white-striped paintings or poles. Cycle tracks are typically wide enough to accommodate two-way cycling traffic, and they may not always be adjacent to existing roadways. The VSU Master Plan contains plans for installing a cycle track along Patterson Street.²¹ All bicycle lanes should incorporate painting that increases safety and visibility, and NACTO highly recommends green within bike lanes at or near major intersections.²² Investing in cycling lanes has paid dividends for many places around the country. More information can be found in NACTO’s “Urban Bikeway Design Guide”²³ and AASHTO’s 4th edition of the “Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.”²⁴

²¹ VSU Master Plan

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/planning/documents/master-plan-2015.pdf>

²² <http://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/bikeway-signing-marking/colored-bike-facilities/>

²³ <http://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/>

²⁴ https://bookstore.transportation.org/item_details.aspx?ID=1943



Cycle Track on John Portman Blvd. in Downtown Atlanta
Source: Google Street View



Protected bike lane in New York City
Source: Jim.henderson- Wikimedia Commons²⁵

2. Wayfinding Signage

Urban environments contain multiple attractions or community services concentrated in a small space. Wayfinding is a useful method to help cyclists and drivers, especially visitors, orient themselves and find their proper destination. The signage may also fit a design theme within a historic district or neighborhood. Downtown districts, college campuses, and tourist destinations are highly recommended to incorporate signage into their street and campus projects. This element is highly appropriate at major intersections. PPPs or crowdfunding can help finance the installation of wayfinding signage since it is

²⁵https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Protected_bikelane_1st_Av_jeh.jpg

relatively inexpensive. The Downtown Master Plan cites public meeting survey results labeling wayfinding among the most important transportation issues in downtown Valdosta.²⁶



Example of Wayfinding in Denver, CO
Source: Andrew Smith

C. Greenways

A greenway, or linear park, is defined as “a corridor of undeveloped land preserved for recreational use or environmental protection.”²⁷ In some cases, abandoned railroad beds are utilized as a form of brownfield development to construct urban greenway trails. Public and private sources of funding have been used by communities to finance the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of these corridors. In Georgia, there are several communities that have utilized PPPs to ensure completion.

The Carrollton Greenbelt in Carrollton, 40 miles west of Atlanta, is a project scheduled for completion in December 2016 that will form a 16-mile paved near-circle trail for bicycling and other recreational purposes²⁸. The project was

²⁶ Downtown Master Plan. See Footnote 12.

²⁷ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/greenway>

²⁸ <http://www.carrolltongreenbelt.com/our-plan/>

designed by Kaizen Collaborative and the PATH Foundation and funded through the City of Carrollton and various foundations, including the non-profit company Friends of the Carrollton Greenbelt, LLC. This nonprofit will also oversee all maintenance and administer an Adopt-A-Trails program.



Carrollton Greenbelt
Source: Friends of Carrollton Greenbelt, LLC²⁹

Another example in Georgia that incorporates PPPs and has proven itself as a notable economic incubator is the 61-mile Silver Comet Trail between Smyrna and the Alabama state line near Cedartown. The Silver Comet Trail is a rail trail overlaying what was once a passenger railway. After its closure in 1989, GDOT acquired the right-of-way and started planning the trail with construction beginning in 1998. Construction and maintenance was made possible by a PPP between GDOT, the PATH Foundation, Georgia State Parks, Cobb County DOT, and Paulding and Polk counties. Today, the Silver Comet Trail is used over 1.9 million times annually and generates over \$100 million in total expenditures in the northwest Georgia region.³⁰ This collaborative project fulfilled mobility needs in both suburban and rural counties and induced economic growth.

²⁹ <http://www.carrolltongreenbelt.com/>

³⁰ Silver Comet Trail Economic Impact Analysis and Planning Study. July 2013.
http://www.bwnwga.org/wp-content/uploads/Silver_Comet_Combined.pdf

Nationally, there are many examples that have exhibited special characteristics, such as the Atlanta Beltline or New York City's High Line, which serve as preservers of historical significance and heritage while serving present and future population members. While it would be insightful to meticulously discuss these national models, this project only serves to begin the conversation about how PPPs can benefit Valdosta and Lowndes County.

If a greenway trail is to be a successful venture, it must include amenities that serve any user - a biker, jogger, or a stroller - regardless of age or ability. Seating is the first necessity of a greenway trail and should be spaced throughout. Mileage markers, along with wayfinding signage and maps, will help users orient themselves accordingly. Hydration and bicycle repair stations are other noteworthy components, especially in a rural area without ready access to businesses or major streets. For intersections with busy highways, appropriate crossing structures should be installed. Areas susceptible to crime should install security signage and lighting.



Hybrid Beacon Signal at Carrollton Greenbelt crossing on Bankhead Hwy. in Carrollton, GA
Source: Google Street View

Types of pavement used should be discussed in the design of a greenway project. Multiple types or pavement colors, in conjunction with visible painting and signage, indicate the preferred use. For example, regular grey

concrete may be reserved for cyclists while red pavement is for pedestrians. These considerations all could be fulfilled under the auspice of a PPP. A greenway should serve to increase mobility among the surrounding population by giving users another means to travel to and from employment and undertake leisurely activity without leaving the city.



Separated Bicycle Path along Broadway in Boulder, CO – note varied pavement for varied uses
Source: Andrew Smith

D. Bicycle Parking

A method of parking bicycles that does not infringe on private property or public right-of-way is another need that should be addressed when planning for a bicycle route or greenway. Downtown areas, college campuses, major employment centers, and businesses are among the many locations that should consider adding bicycle parking to their site. Many types exist and are listed in the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) guidelines. Several common forms include inverted U, tree guard bicycle racks, and bike corrals.³¹

For high density areas, bicycle lockers may be appropriate. In Cambridge, Massachusetts,

³¹ APBP Guidelines
http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apbp.org/resource/resmgr/Bicycle_Parking/EssentialsofBikeParking_FINA.pdf

home to Harvard University, the city installed multiple Alewife Station T structures to alleviate air pollution problems and to promote their vision of becoming a bicycle friendly community. While Valdosta does not bear the type of air pollution problems that larger metropolitan areas face, protected parking areas may be a worthy investment for future population members such as students, military, or young professionals. An investment in bicycle parking is inexpensive given that the average cost to install and purchase a rack is \$660.³²



Pedal & Park Structure in Cambridge, MA
Source: Bicycling Magazine³³

E. Educational Materials

Educational programs and resources should be utilized to spread knowledge on good mannerisms and etiquette while using bike lanes and greenway trails. The Atlanta Beltline has sponsored etiquette campaigns in the past to educate trail users on trail rules and courtesy measures³⁴. Existing national programs such as Safe Routes to School and Bike Appreciation Week should be sponsored and promoted by schools and employers. PPPs may be necessary to see these ideas take shape.

³² <https://www.georgiabikes.org/resources/engineering-for-better-bicycling/cost-of-bicycle-facilities>

³³ <http://www.bicycling.com/culture/advocacy/2014-top-50-bike-friendly-cities/slide/10>

³⁴ <http://beltline.org/2016/09/09/atlanta-beltline-launches-new-etiquette-tools/>

F. Recent Funding Trends

Crowdfunding initiatives are currently a national trend to ensure project support. The nation's first crowdfunded cycle track is located in Portland, Oregon.³⁵ Memphis, Tennessee revolutionized the practice of crowdfunding for infrastructure projects when it proposed a project called the Hampline, which will be the nation's first cycle track funded partly from private sources upon completion.³⁶



Hampline Project in Memphis, TN

Top: Broad Avenue @ Lipford Street in July 2014
Bottom: Broad Avenue @ Lipford Street in July 2016
Source: Google Street View

Approximately \$70,000 was raised through crowdfunding towards this project. It will incorporate a complete streets design along Broad Avenue in the Binghamton neighborhood and allow cyclists to traverse what was once a five lane highway³⁷. This was one of several

³⁵ <http://bikeportland.org/2009/08/31/first-look-at-portlands-inaugural-cycle-track-22932>

³⁶ <http://www.peopleforbikes.org/blog/entry/memphis-is-about-to-build-the-countrys-first-crowdfunded-bike-lane>

³⁷ <http://www.livablememphis.org/the-hampline>

projects that addressed Memphis's dubious 2010 label by Cycling Magazine as one of the worst U.S. cities for bicycling.³⁸

Several other cities, such as Denver, have followed suit with crowdfunding to install bike facilities along streets. A PPP between the City of Denver and the Downtown Denver Partnership, along with the utilization of the fundraising site Ioby (www.ioby.com), has made possible the construction of a protected bike lane along Arapahoe Street.³⁹ Crowdfunding accounted for a \$35,000 match to the \$120,000 pledged by the Downtown Denver Partnership.



Arapahoe Street Protected Bike Lane in September 2016
Source: Google Street View

“Road diets”, or road re-configuration projects, promote an atmosphere of strong neighborhood identity and walkability. They typically convert four lane undivided roads into three lanes with one center turn lane and two bike lanes for the purpose of “completing the street” and reducing crash rates.⁴⁰ The TVP outlines three other proposed, unfunded

³⁸ On the Right Track: Recommendations for the Future of Active Transportation in Little Rock. *Clinton School of Public Service, University of Arkansas – Little Rock*, 2007.
<http://ualr.edu/universitydistrict/files/2007/09/City-of-LR-Bicycle-Plan.pdf>

³⁹ <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/denver-bike-lanes-crowdfunding>

⁴⁰ http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/

Lowndes County “road diet” projects in the Informative Listing section of the document. Innovative projects that capitalize on current infrastructure would benefit any metropolitan community. PPPs and crowdfunding should be investigated as an avenue of fundraising.

Bike sharing is an option that can be financed through crowdfunding. In Kansas City, Missouri, small campaigns ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000 were launched in 2014 to expand the number of stations in the city limits.⁴¹ Zagster⁴² is another bike-sharing company that has entered into partnerships with city governments to provide services to their residents and visitors. Fort Wayne, IN is a notable example of a municipality that has utilized Zagster to improve mobility among its population members.⁴³



Docking Station at the University of Colorado-Boulder
Source: Andrew Smith

Bicycle repair stations, seating areas and picnic shelters along greenways and in parks can also be financed through PPP, crowdfunding, or donations. A notable crowdfunding site for parks sponsored through the National Recreation and Park Association called Fund Your Park.⁴⁴ In Leesburg, Virginia, for example, this site was used to fund a skate park and

⁴¹ <http://www.planetizen.com/node/66979>

⁴² www.zagster.com

⁴³ <http://www.indianatech.edu/news/fort-wayne-bike-share-station-opens-indiana-tech/>

⁴⁴ www.fundyourpark.org

shade structures.⁴⁵ Due to the ubiquitous nature of technology in today’s society, a platform for charging smartphones and other cellular devices should be considered. Bryant Park in New York City recently installed solar charging stations through a PPP.⁴⁶



Solar Charging Station in NYC's Bryant Park
Source: Bryant Park Blog

G. What Exists Here and How Can We Supplement It?

In Valdosta and Lowndes County, there are already several greenways with room to expand. The Azalea City Trail (ACT) is 3.5 miles long between the Craig Center on West Gordon Street and Vallotton Park. The Ponderosa Trail is a 0.25 mile pedestrian-only extension of Ponderosa Drive near two schools. Pertaining to bicycle parking, downtown Valdosta is already on the right track through the installation of four bicycle racks with Community Improvement District (CID) funds.⁴⁷ Student Quarters Valdosta is a local apartment complex which sponsors a bike sharing program for their residents.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ <http://patch.com/virginia/leesburg/crowdfunding-campaign-aims-provide-shade-structures-catoclin-skatepark>

⁴⁶ <http://blog.bryantpark.org/2014/07/solar-powered-charging-stations-land-in.html>

⁴⁷ <http://valdostatoday.com/2014/07/new-bike-racks-installed-downtown-to-create-bicycle-friendly-community/>

⁴⁸ <http://sqvaldosta.com/amenities/>



Bike Sharing Station at Student Quarters in Valdosta
Source: Andrew Smith, SGRC

Bicycle lanes along existing roadways are currently sporadic and disconnected. Near VSU, Sustella Avenue between Baytree and West Mary has non-protected bike lanes. Also, four vehicle lanes on Melody Lane and Lankford Drive were reduced to three for a bike lane in each direction. These are “road diet” projects in this community, but the challenge is to improve connectivity between housing, retail, education, and other community services.



Bike Rack in Downtown Valdosta
Source: Michael Rivera, Wikimedia Commons⁴⁹

In order to construct more bicycle and pedestrian amenities in Valdosta and Lowndes County, there needs to be a recognized, championing voice in the community. This would serve as an advocacy group with the intent of educating the public on present and forthcoming bicycling options along with

⁴⁹https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ashley_St_bicycle_racks_closeup,_downtown_Valdosta.JPG

lobbying for public and private funding. Currently, the best way to advance this need is to form a bicycle/pedestrian advisory group or committee.

Within the Comprehensive Plan, Community Policy 2.10.1 outlines the need for public school partnerships with the private sector. PPPs should be considered to improve pedestrian connectivity between schools and the neighborhoods they serve, especially elementary schools. Attention should also be focused upon expanding the outreach of national programs such as Safe Routes to School and Safe Kids Worldwide.

Trail infrastructure expansion is currently in the Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan, but public funding is currently not prioritized for this. PPPs and crowdfunding should be considered to expand the Azalea City Trail and other off-road trails and greenways in the community. There is a growing idea within the national Rails to Trails movement called “Rails with Trails” in which a trail is aligned with a present and fully operating railroad, provided there is a buffer between the railroad and the trail.⁵⁰ As of September 2013, there were 161 trails in 41 states identified by the Rails to Trails Conservancy.⁵¹ The abundance of railroads in the community should be considered as an opportunity for growth in this aspect of infrastructure provided that ROW acquisition is not an issue.

Adopt-A-Trail maintenance programs are similar to Adopt-A-Highway and are existent throughout the nation in places like the Razorback Greenway in Fayetteville, Arkansas

⁵⁰<http://www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?id=2982>

⁵¹<http://www.railstotrails.org/resource-library/resources/americas-rails-with-trails/>

and the Carrollton Greenbelt in Carrollton, Georgia. Historic preservation of cultural and natural resources should be an emphasis. Paid parking and donation boxes are other existing options that allow for on-site fundraising geared towards maintenance costs and future enhancements.



Old Beaufort Depot along the Spanish Moss Trail in Beaufort, South Carolina
Source: City of Beaufort, SC

Bike and pedestrian infrastructure provides an opportunity for public art displays. The presence of a strong Department of Art at VSU, the Annette-Howell Turner Center for the Arts, and the Public Arts Advisory Committee generate a strong foundation for bringing more public art to recreation venues.

As previously stated, bicycle parking is being addressed in downtown Valdosta, but in other parts of the community, bicyclists are underserved, and private funding windows could be utilized to improve this. Tax incentives should be explored to motivate business owners to consider installing a bike rack for their customers. Section 222-6 of Valdosta's Land Development Regulations (LDR) already contains regulations pertaining to bicycle parking structures; however, it only applies to land uses that offer over 100 parking spaces.⁵²

⁵²City of Valdosta Land Development Regulations <http://www.valdostacity.com/Data/Sites/1/media/d>

Zoning changes may be necessary to attract more bicycle parking to the area.

Along the ACT, there is a lack of places to repair a bicycle. Given the trail length, this should be available in at least one location. On the University of Georgia (UGA) campus in Athens, a grant from the UGA Office of Sustainability financed the installation of four do-it-yourself bike stations around campus.⁵³ The company that manufactured these stations, Dero, would be a starting place for allowing users of the ACT or VSU students to repair their bikes on-site.⁵⁴

Bicycle racks and other infrastructure can incorporate technology. Colorado Springs, for instance has developed an app and placed QR codes on racks to help residents and visitors plan their trip or find partner businesses near their location. A one-stop website for bike/pedestrian information could be developed here.

Within the VSU Master Plan, there is language regarding a future cycle track on North Patterson Street.⁵⁵ Currently, no cycle tracks are in the Valdosta area, and this would be an ambitious project given the cost and the collaboration with GDOT necessary to make it happen. Crowdfunded projects mentioned in previous sections of this report make this vision attainable, but commitment is needed.

The community should consider sponsoring an Open Street Event where a public street is closed down temporarily to allow for an

<https://planning-zoning/chapter-222---off-street-parking-standards.pdf>

⁵³<http://gradynewsresource.uga.edu/tele5560/pump-and-repair-cycle-stations-pop-up-on-campus/>

⁵⁴<http://www.dero.com/product/fixit/>

⁵⁵ VSU Master Plan.

alternative use.⁵⁶ Macon recently held their first Open Street Event in April 2016 along a 2 mile stretch of College Street near the Mercer University campus.⁵⁷ Also, National Bike Month is in May of every year, and an awareness event during that time frame would be welcomed by the growing faction of bicyclists.⁵⁸

Lowndes County recently partnered with Corporate Health Partners (CHP) to develop a wellness program for employees with the intent to reduce cardiovascular disease and keep health insurance affordable. According to a CHP report, the county promised a 30% insurance reduction as an incentive for fulfilling all program requirements, and the results showed with reductions in hypertension, elevated blood sugar, body mass index, and tobacco use, among other public health considerations.⁵⁹ Infrastructure PPPs would continue this ambition in reducing public health challenges.



**Fitness Station along Cairns Esplanade Walking Path
in Cairns, Queensland, Australia**
Source: Andrew Smith

Given the necessity to reduce obesity and cardiovascular disease not only in Valdosta and Lowndes County, but throughout Georgia, park features that encourage personal fitness should be installed through either public or private dollars. Fitness stations could be incorporated into the current alignment of the ACT or installed in popular parks. Hydration is essential given Georgia's humid weather, and water fountains should be installed and fully operable. Trash receptacles and recycling should be available in all community parks and facilities for visitors to dispose of non-household garbage.

⁵⁶ www.openstreetsproject.org

⁵⁷ <http://mercercluster.com/18985/uncategorized/bike-macon-is-kicking-cars-off-of-college-street-this-april/>

⁵⁸ <http://bikeleague.org/bikemonth>

⁵⁹ Lowndes County, GA Case Study. *Corporate Health Partners*, 2015. <http://www.chp-inc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/SouthGeorgiaCountyCaseStudy.pdf>

IV. How to Adopt PPPs

Sections I and II of this report served as an introduction to the PPP model and their growing influence in terms of community infrastructure. Section III examined how select communities have taken advantage of PPPs, crowdfunding, and other private sources of funding for bicycle/pedestrian initiatives. While some accomplishments may seem ambitious, they were included for brainstorming purposes. This section of the report will describe how a PPP should be formed by taking into account legislation (or lack thereof) and current local resources. Several best practices from around the Georgia will assist in the discussion.

A. Existing Regulations

1. FAST Act

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was signed into law by President Barack Obama in December 2015. It was hailed as the largest transportation reauthorization law since the 1990s, and it bodes well for the future of PPPs. The FAST Act contains language that, in retrospect, curtails previous environmental review processes, which may increase the likelihood of a PPP developing.

Surface transportation funds were allowed by the FAST Act to be used by individual states to develop a state PPP office that would oversee the design and implementation of PPPs.⁶⁰ Finally, the FAST Act allowed for the opportunity to provide technical assistance to states that wish to adopt enabling legislation.⁶¹ This federal legislation provides the statutes

⁶⁰ <http://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-the-fast-act/>

⁶¹ <http://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=f87e4db5-f425-475f-8571-99705b4b4700>

and guidelines necessary to implement transportation and infrastructure PPPs on a large scale, such as high-speed rail that spans over several hundred miles, and a smaller scale as seen in this report.

2. Enabling Legislation

Given the expansion of the PPP market in recent years and the allowance by recent federal legislation, various states have enacted enabling legislation geared towards regulating the creation, design, and implementation of PPPs. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Georgia is one of thirty-three (33) states to have signed into law legislation that outlines the regulations for adopting PPPs within the state.

The Public Private Facilities Infrastructure Act of 2015 (PPFIA) was signed into law by Governor Nathan Deal on May 5, 2015. It empowers “any county, municipality, consolidated government or board of education” the ability to form PPPs to complete “qualifying projects”, provided that the local government adopt either a set of model guidelines or a policy, rule, or ordinance with several minimal provisions.⁶² This law defines “qualifying projects” as something that meets a “public need or public service” provided that a need is proven, determined, and is cost-effective in the short and long run.

PPFIA is the culmination of a Georgia General Assembly effort of at least seven years that expands upon a law first authorized in 2009 that empowered GDOT to solicit and form PPPs to complete projects. The most significant product to arise from this 2009 law is the I-75 Northwest Corridor that is currently under

⁶² <https://opb.georgia.gov/documents/public-private-partnerships-guidelines-committee>

construction in Cobb County.⁶³ During the 2010 General Assembly session, a law titled the “State and Local Public-Private Partnership Act of 2010” would have established a state PPP office to oversee PPP development in communities, but it ultimately failed to pass the House. Today, progress has occurred with the development of model guidelines by the Public-Private Partnerships Guidelines Committee that was established under the auspice of PPFIA.

The model guidelines are accessible through the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget. Several PPP provisions must be established by the local government in these select areas:⁶⁴

- 1. Period of time each calendar year to accept unsolicited PPP proposals**
- 2. Procedures for financial review and analysis of an unsolicited proposal (i.e. cost-benefit analysis, evaluation of public need for project to commence, etc.)**
- 3. Determining local government processing/application fees**
- 4. Procedure to issue/publish a request for proposals, review them, and determine the appropriate sponsor from the candidates. Review is at least 90 days.**
- 5. Likelihood of appointing an independent adviser to consult during the review process.**

⁶³Market Update: A Review of Recent Activity in the US Public Private Partnership (P3) Sector and the Outlook for the Year to Come. *Practical Law*, 2016.

<http://www.squirepattonboggs.com/~media/files/insights/publications/2016/03/market-update-a-review-of-recent-activity-in-the-us-public-private-partnership/market20update20a20review20of20recent20activity20in20the20us20p320sector20and20outlook.20pdf>

⁶⁴Georgia PPFIA Model Guidelines, pg. 2-3. Please consult for complete list of required provisions.

Henceforward, local governments are required to either enact the model guidelines as they currently stand or develop a rule, policy or ordinance governing PPP practices. Since the model guidelines were released on July 1, 2016, many local governments are still investigating their impact on local policy, business, and infrastructure and have not adopted the model guidelines. This is forecasted to change in the latter half of FY2017 and FY2018. The content of this report will hopefully be a tool of encouragement for adopting such guidelines in Valdosta and Lowndes County.

B. Who to Consult for Funding

On the local, state, and national levels, there are many businesses and foundations that contribute to charitable causes and benefit the greater population. Before consulting anyone, it is important to prioritize projects and determine which is most feasible and attainable. Deliver information based on what is most vital to the community and tailor it to the group’s interests.

1. Local Businesses and Foundations

The Community Foundation of Southern Georgia (CF) is a philanthropic, nonprofit organization based in Thomasville, GA that assists in distributing charitable funds to individuals, families, and businesses.⁶⁵ Along with overseeing various student scholarships and Part of their mission is to “encourage community initiatives and partnerships”. This is aligned with the goal of PPPs, and CF charitable funds should not be underestimated.

The Greater Valdosta chapter of United Way is another charity that has an established

⁶⁵<https://www.cfsga.net/index.htm>

presence in the Lowndes County area.⁶⁶ A significant component of their work is to promote educational causes and to partner with agencies that instill youth leadership and development. A nearby example of a PPP that involved the United Way is along the Tom White Linear Park and Trail in Moultrie. In 2011, the United Way sponsored a 1200 foot path called the Born Learning Trail, which is aimed at toddler education. Along with a grant by the United Way, the YMCA, Boy Scout troop, and local high school Key Club each contributed to the trail's development.⁶⁷

The 0.25 mile Ponderosa Trail near W.G. Nunn Elementary School was developed in late 2010 by an initiative called Project S.O.S. (Save our Students). This was a group of young volunteers that spearheaded the design of the trail and were aided by local businesses and churches, including the Langdale Foundation.⁶⁸ Given that programs such as Safe Routes to School should become a more significant practice in the area, projects similar to this can promote connectivity to make this SRTS more feasible in the future.

For the county level of government, the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) is a nonprofit organization that has a variety of resources available to all 159 county governments in Georgia. The ACCG Partners Program is one particular opportunity that is open to businesses, firms, and organizations that want to become involved with county government. One of the unique benefits of

being an ACCG Partner is “unique sponsorship opportunities.”⁶⁹

The local community will garner the highest direct interest in an infrastructure PPP. A variety of local businesses, such as the Valdosta Bike Center, who have a known interest in building more infrastructure that suits their customers' needs, should be included in the discussion phase of infrastructure projects. At the absolute minimum, inquire businesses about potential sponsorships. This will not necessarily garner or guarantee an excessive amount of financial assistance, but if executed properly, a PPP can cover a fraction of the financing and maintenance. For instance, the Walton Family Foundation pledged \$15 million to assist in construction of the 36 mile Razorback Greenway between Fayetteville, AR and Bentonville, AR.⁷⁰ This is an outlier example of how a PPP with a local organization can benefit an infrastructure project.

2. State and National Foundations

Within the state of Georgia, there are an abundant amount of resources and outlets that are open to PPPs for infrastructure projects. The PATH Foundation, as previously discussed, was instrumental in developing multiple urban greenway trails throughout Georgia, including the Atlanta Beltline and the Silver Comet Trail. It has also expanded its reach outside metro Atlanta and the state of Georgia with the Spanish Moss Trail in Beaufort, South Carolina.⁷¹ If Valdosta were to pursue expanding their trail network beyond the existing ACT, the PATH

⁶⁶ <http://www.unitedwayvaldosta.org/>

⁶⁷ http://www.moultrieobserver.com/news/local_news/city-dedicates-kids-trail/article_3915024c-4324-57f7-90cb-aea596050838.html

⁶⁸ http://www.valdostadailytimes.com/news/local_news/students-present-plans-for-community-trail/article_e6e11943-bc6a-5348-9fdd-ccd7750522a0.html

⁶⁹ <http://accg.org/content.asp?ContentId=382>

⁷⁰ <http://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/stories/communities-unite-to-celebrate-razorback-regional-greenway>

⁷¹ <https://pathfoundation.org/trails/trail-descriptions>

Foundation would be an invaluable state-level nonprofit organization that could contribute.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has made available the Recreational Trail Program (RTP). This program is managed by the Federal Highway Administration and administered by the state of Georgia. Through this reimbursement program, grants may be awarded to city and county governments along with federal and state agencies for trail construction and maintenance. The members of the advisory committee that review all applications represent a variety of recreational interests such as hiking, bicycling, off-road vehicle users, equestrian, water trails, greenway trails.⁷² In 2013, which was a year after this program formally launched, approximately \$1.66 million in grant money were awarded to various municipalities and county governments throughout Georgia.⁷³

The Georgia Cities Foundation provides support for revitalizing downtown districts and ensuring historic preservation across the state, and their contributions are no stranger to the Valdosta area. Thanks to their generous \$250,000 maximum loan in December 2014, the Central Valdosta Development Authority was able to renovate the historic Cranford building on West Hill Avenue for a total cost of \$2.27 million.⁷⁴ The Green Communities Fund is a program sponsored by the Georgia Cities Foundation that promotes sustainability in downtown districts.⁷⁵ Pursuing a project with the help of

⁷² <https://gastateparks.org/grants/rtp>

⁷³ <http://www.outdoorhub.com/news/2013/04/03/1-66-million-in-trail-grants-awarded-for-recreation-in-georgia/>

⁷⁴ <http://www.georgiacitiesfoundation.org/Projects/Valdosta,-110-114-West-Hill-Avenue.aspx>

⁷⁵ <http://www.valdostacity.com/downtown-economic-incentives>

this source is consistent with Opportunity 1.13 in the Comprehensive Plan (see Appendix A). With regard to historic preservation, there are various state and federal tax incentives that provide ample reasoning for establishing infrastructure PPPs that are conscious of historic value and aim to preserve it.

Nationally, there are several competitive sources of private funding that can benefit a public infrastructure project. This is in addition to federal grants offered by the United States Department of Transportation, among other federal agencies. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is an organization that operates with the belief that all residents of American cities should live within ten minutes walking distance of a park.⁷⁶ TPL has benefited many communities through the creation of more parkland. Notable examples include the Bellwood/Quarry Westside Park along the Atlanta Beltline and Chicago's 606 urban greenway trail. TPL has multiple programs and initiatives including Creative Placemaking, the FitnessZone Program, and Climate-Smart Cities, among others.⁷⁷ While this organization is not a direct source of funding, it has helped cities procure funding from other grant sources. For bike causes, People for Bikes has offered community grant opportunities since 1999, and these have amounted to approximately \$3 million.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ <https://www.tpl.org/about>

⁷⁷ <https://www.tpl.org/our-work>

⁷⁸ <http://www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/community-grants>

3. Private Individuals

In addition to local, state, and national foundations, perhaps the most important source of private funding is from interested citizens who want to make a difference. Stakeholders and community benefactors are among the members of this faction of the population.

As seen through the Save Our Students initiative, a youth who sees a need in the community may be able to provide and delegate service. An example of this may be of a Boy Scout completing his service project that is required to attain the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout. The key consideration here is that the Scout is in charge of seeing the need for a facility or enhancement to an existing facility. A series of Eagle Scout projects benefited the greenway trail in Moultrie in 2014 by installing seating, interactive features, and a pavilion.⁷⁹ The importance and value of civic duty should never be underestimated or taken for granted.

4. Crowdfunding Platforms

Throughout this report, various crowdfunding platforms were mentioned with examples of infrastructure projects that were partly funded through crowdfunding. This section serves as a reminder of the invaluable nature of crowdfunding in achieving a project's goals and why it should be considered in Lowndes County.

Platforms such as IOBY (ioby.com), Kickstarter (kickstarter.com), Neighborly (neighborly.com), and Citizinvestor (citizinvestor.com) are more appropriate in fostering civic engagement through virtual means. Parks and recreation

⁷⁹http://www.moultrieobserver.com/news/local_news/trio-of-eagles/article_625bb2ed-896e-5cf2-a4f5-408657545353.html

agencies should investigate the feasibility of the Fund Your Park crowdfunding feature sponsored by the National Recreation and Parks Association (see page 17).

According to Forbes, in 2014 alone, approximately \$16 billion was crowdfunded for a variety of causes.⁸⁰ This speaks volumes for how powerful a tool crowdfunding is and what can be done with it. Crowdfunding still does not, however, exist without critics who compare it to taxes.⁸¹ The key difference, however, is that crowdfunding gives people transparency and insight as to how their personal contributions will be applied to make a place they are passionate about better for themselves and others. Fundraisers on crowdfunding sites should be mindful of startup and monthly fees for using these platforms.

C. Negotiation

Once enabling legislation is passed on the local level and reliable funding sources are consulted, the next major step is to negotiate a memorandum of agreement (MOA). This legal document will govern operations and who bears responsibility for certain facets of the infrastructure. Between different projects, these agreements are rarely carbon copies of each other, but they all spell out what each organization expects of the other and how compensation is dispersed. Ratified PPPs are known to last for decades at a time.

⁸⁰<http://www.forbes.com/sites/chancebarnett/2015/06/09/trends-show-crowdfunding-to-surpass-vc-in-2016/#7e38a46d444b>

⁸¹<https://thislandisparkland.com/2014/11/21/you-know-what-the-original-crowdfunding-for-parks-was-taxes/>

At this point, it is appropriate to recall the four categorical types of PPPs first mentioned on Page 3 of this report. They are listed below:

1. Design-Build
2. Design-Build-Operate-Maintain
3. Design-Build-Finance
4. Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain

Never underestimate stakeholders and private companies while in the negotiation process. If unique knowledge and input is offered, it is in the best interest to listen as it may shape the PPP project. The PPP landscape has become a popular resource in recent years because of changes in the economic landscape on the local, state, and federal levels; however, it is subject to the same supply and demand principles as government finance.

MOAs are commonplace in the political and legal communities, and this holds true when establishing a PPP. These typically begin with establishing an owner of a property or piece of infrastructure, usually the municipal government or agency, and the operator. The operator can either be the government agency or a private party, depending on the type of arrangement. Operators should especially be identified in DBOM and DBFOM PPPs. Operators either manage or lease the property depending on the responsibilities granted by the owner and the financial resources available.

PPPs may or may not include private financing. Varying finance sources are available, with bond issuance as a popular source and equity capital deemed as too costly. Private activity bonds (PABs) in which the private company is charged with repaying bondholders and investors are

especially common.⁸² According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, PABs accounted for 17% of PPP value and 25% of accrued project debt from 2008 to 2013.⁸³

Financing comes into play with DBF and DBFOM types of PPPs. The overlying question in this aspect of a PPP is who bears the initial cost and maintenance cost? Should costs be paid upfront or in specific installments? These are questions that should be answered early in the negotiation process. A Build Operate Transfer (BOT) clause in which means of concessions and/or compensation are established for undertaking certain tasks is important, as well.⁸⁴

Risk is an aspect of PPPs that fluctuates depending on the type formed. Sharing risk and responsibility is essential in executing a successful PPP. Liability and insurance costs should be understood and factored into the equation for what it takes to keep infrastructure operating in a safe, efficient manner. The most common fallacy of the PPP model is underperformance of maintenance duties by a party. The agreement should outline incentives for meeting or exceeding expectations and penalties for not meeting expectations. Stipulations like this will ensure that a project is completed on or ahead of schedule and that it stays within prescribed

⁸²<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2014/12/08/102515/public-private-partnerships/>

⁸³ Expanding our Nation's Infrastructure through Innovative Financing. *U.S. Department of the Treasury*, 2014.
https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/economic-policy/Documents/3_Expanding%20our%20Nation's%20Infrastructure%20through%20Innovative%20Financing.pdf

⁸⁴<https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/agreements/concessions-bots-dbos>

budget constraints. It also can generate motivation for going beyond the written provisions. The costs of materials typically increase on a temporal basis, and this could present problems if on a tight budget. Delay and cost overruns are forms of risk that should not be ignored.⁸⁵

While bankruptcy is certainly a rare case in the PPP landscape, it could happen if there is not a high return on investment or revenues do not meet expected benchmarks.⁸⁶ Preventing financial hardship is certainly high on any given individual's thought process in forming partnerships. Outlining source(s) of revenue for an infrastructure project will either make or break a negotiation. The amount that a government can match in a solicited or unsolicited financial proposal will be a contentious aspect of the PPP debate. Granting permission for soliciting donations either on-site through donation boxes or online is one of many approaches to this challenge.

In the event that a partnership collapses, a MOA should include methods for exiting the collaboration. This could be through verbal or written notice well in advance of the intended resignation date, typically at least 30 days in advance or as many as 90 days. Penalties, through reprimand or fines, should be discussed and established. Finally, a timeline of completion in a MOA ensures all parties are aware of important deadlines and stay on track. Laws that govern public knowledge and access should be followed when a PPP is formed and approved.

⁸⁵ See Footnote 82.

⁸⁶ See Footnote 63.

V. Conclusion

Based on the outlined policies from the Comprehensive Plan and numerous examples around the nation, PPPs should be considered a part of long-range planning for Valdosta and Lowndes County's multimodal infrastructure. The healthy growth of Valdosta and Lowndes County coupled with the passing of PPFIA in Georgia along with its sponsored model guideline should be enough motivation to pursue infrastructure PPPs with partners from local, state, and higher levels. This report was conceived as a VLMPO publication that outlines how PPPs are formed to benefit bicycle, pedestrian, and recreation infrastructure, but it goes further beyond what PPPs and their applications in this aspect of planning. This report also serves as a mechanism for how to implement PPP ordinances in the community that allow for these agreements to maximize their potential in the area.

PPPs are a promising application for infrastructure projects, but they should be handled delicately and not utilized excessively. Maintaining a pragmatic approach to the establishment of partnerships and the execution of a common objective should be the primary concern for governments that choose to enter into agreements with private parties. While this report focuses primarily on infrastructure that promotes higher mobility and improves public and environmental health, PPPs have further applications to utilities and ridesharing services. The possibilities of what can be done under the authority of PPPs are expansive, but it is up to the parties involved to fulfill their obligations, including generating the best return on investment for the people.

Appendices

Appendices A-G: Directly/Indirectly Related 2016 Comprehensive Plan Community Goals, Issues, Policies and Opportunities

Appendix A: Goal 1 - Economic Development

Issues & Policies

Issue 1.8 – Lack of an established investment network, resulting in a lack of access to capital

Policy 1.8.4 - Public/private partnerships for developing investment capital should be encouraged.

Opportunities

Opportunity 1.1 - Regional Economic Engines such as South Georgia Medical Center, Valdosta State University, Wiregrass Tech, and Moody Air Force Base all contribute to the economic development of the Greater Lowndes community. Continued collaboration to allow for the growth of these institutions with respect to the surrounding environment is vital and will strengthen Greater Lowndes' position in the expanding research triangle within south-central Georgia.

Opportunity 1.7 - Important parts of the local economy which should be better promoted and utilized include: Agritourism (Georgia Grown Trails 41 and 37, Raisin' Cane, Georgia Olives), agriculture/silviculture, eco-tourism (the Withlacoochee, Little, and Alapaha Rivers, Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area and Wetland Education Center, and proximity to Okefenokee Swamp), and quality hotels and restaurants.

Opportunity 1.9 - Improved gateways into the jurisdictions in Lowndes County will increase awareness of the communities and confer a better sense of place.

Opportunity 1.13 - Implement more smart and green technologies, including renewable energy and energy-efficient modifications to structures and building standards.

Appendix B: Goal 3 - Community Wellness

Issues & Policies

Issue 3.4 - Lack of outdoor recreation venues (trails, etc.) and lack of education regarding what outdoor recreation opportunities are available and how to use them safely.

Policy 3.4.1 - Efforts should be made to preserve, improve, and market affordable and accessible outdoor recreational facilities, including meeting/event spaces, parks and open space, and programs for adults and youth.

Policy 3.4.3 - An active, healthy lifestyle should be promoted through livable community urban design and development patterns, including hiking, running, and biking trails connecting urban and rural areas with parks and water trails along our creeks and rivers.

Issue 3.6 - The community has a low walkability score, as measured by walkscore.com.

Policy 3.6.2 - Retrofitting of existing developments and establishment of new developments that encourage active lifestyles for residents of all age groups should be promoted and encouraged.

Policy 3.6.3 - The community's anticipated growth should be guided to occur in a well-integrated yet organized fashion which protects our community's character and resources, promotes efficient use of infrastructure and transportation facilities, and supports quality economic development and a diverse population.

Policy 3.6.6 - Handicap accessibility to all public facilities should be ensured.

Opportunities

Opportunity 3.1 - Increased pedestrian/bicycle facilities and recreational facilities (parks, trails, dog parks, improved public river/fishing access) will help encourage healthier, active lifestyles.

Opportunity 3.2 - Developments should include pedestrian/bicycle facilities and be built in such a fashion as to allow youth access without automobile dependence.

Opportunity 3.3 - Future growth should encourage public and private recreational and entertainment facilities in close proximity to neighborhood centers.

Opportunity 3.5 - There are a good number of recreational programs available through the Valdosta-Lowndes Parks & Recreation Authority (VLPR).

Opportunity 3.6 - Greater promotion of environmental clean-up, through organizations and programs such as Keep Lowndes/Valdosta Beautiful (KLVB), WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS), Adopt-a-Highway, Adopt-a-Stream, Rivers Alive, and the school systems, will address litter and pollution challenges.

Opportunity 3.10 - Many employers are now participating in employee wellness programs.

Opportunity 3.11 - Collaboration between educational systems, non-profits, and local governments will ensure a comprehensive approach to improving community wellness, while reducing problems such as health care costs, infant mortality rates, obesity rates, and childhood diabetes rates.

Appendix C: Goal 6 - Natural Resources

Issues and Policies

Issue 6.1 - Need more local promotion and marketing of natural resources.

Policy 6.1.1 - Efforts should be made to build community awareness of current cultural, recreational and natural resources, and develop a web-based data management system to provide informational resources to local officials and the public.

Issue 6.2 - Current growth trends will eventually lead to degradation of natural greenspaces.

Policy 6.2.2 - Active preservation and utilization of natural greenspaces and parkland should be encouraged and actively supported.

Policy 6.2.3 - The community should consider and plan for infrastructure, transportation, and natural resource protection during economic development decision-making.

Issue 6.3 - The community needs more preservation of natural and conservation lands, greenery, and the urban forest within the City, on both private and public lands.

Policy 6.3.2 - The reestablishment of a greenspace program to establish a connected network of greenspaces and parkland should be considered.

Policy 6.3.3 - Native plants should be encouraged for landscaping rather than non-native ornamentals.

Issue 6.14 - Need bike and/or hiking trails along the rivers.

Policy 6.14.1 - High quality recreational opportunities should be provided that promote and preserve the region's natural resources for future generations and tourism and recreation opportunities including parks, connected with each other and urban and rural areas through greenways, hiking, running, and biking trails, and blueways along the rivers and creeks.

Policy 6.14.2 - Community-wide recreation plans should be updated and implemented to aid in future community facility planning and coordination.

Issue 6.15 - More programs are needed that take children on nature tours and educate them about the environment.

Policy 6.15.1 - Education should be provided to citizens and the development community regarding natural processes of greenspaces and available incentive programs for conservation.

Opportunities

Opportunity 6.1 - Reestablishment of a greenspace program to establish a connected network of greenspaces and parkland, through programs such as Rails to Trails, would help preserve natural areas for future generations. Implementation techniques should include promotion of conservation easement opportunities and greater collaboration with the Tax Assessors office to provide incentives for land owners to participate in greenspace protection.

Opportunity 6.2 - The Arbor Day Foundation has recognized Valdosta as Tree City USA, VSU as a Tree Campus USA, and Georgia Power as a Tree Line USA utility. This is believed to be the only community with all three certifications.

Opportunity 6.4 - Valdosta State University is making improvements to the Azalea City Trail and Camellia Trail.

Appendix D: Goal 7 - Cultural Resources

Issues & Policies

Issue 7.1 - There needs to be more awareness of the many cultural programs, activities, and events that are available locally.

Policy 7.1.1 - Efforts should be made to identify, preserve, protect, promote, provide access, and manage the broad range of cultural and historic resources in the Southern Georgia Region, engaging in public-private partnerships when appropriate.

Policy 7.1.2 - Efforts should be made to build community awareness of current cultural, recreational and natural resources, and develop a web-based data management system to provide informational resources to local officials and the public.

Opportunities

Opportunity 7.4 - Greater protection efforts should occur to utilize historic resources and incorporate them into the community's tourism efforts. Implementation techniques should include nominations to the federal register where appropriate.

Opportunity 7.8 - Balance historical preservation with desire for new construction.

Appendix E: Goal 8 – Transportation

Issues & Policies

Issue 8.1 There is a lack of transportation options for getting to work, education, healthcare, and stores. Traffic planning has focused mostly on the automobile.

Policy 8.1.1 - Bike and pedestrian transportation infrastructure should be built and promoted, as identified in developed plan that links schools, neighborhoods, and activity centers, as well as planned transit services that attract residents and tourists for healthy alternative modes of transportation. The community should continue to be made increasingly bicycle and pedestrian friendly, while promoting economic development through scenic tourism.

Policy 8.1.2 - Newly constructed, reconfigured, or retrofitted roadways should reflect NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials) standards of aesthetics, environmental stewardship, and urban design; and should fully accommodate multiple functions, including pedestrians, parking, alternative modes of transportation, and vehicular circulation.

Policy 8.1.3 - Stakeholders and those affected by local transportation projects should be provided with early notification, and the public should be provided with opportunities to become involved in project goals, timelines, and information throughout the duration of each project.

Policy 8.1.4 - Awareness through various forms (maps, brochures, etc.) about cycling, walking, sharing the road, public health, and planned transit services should be encouraged, especially to local schools and universities.

Policy 8.1.5 - Walking, biking, and accessible public transit should be considered viable and sustainable forms of transportation supported through appropriate land use and infrastructure decisions.

Issue 8.3 - Pedestrian crossings, particularly around schools, can be dangerous and need to be addressed. Some crossing signals do not work. Some intersections, even though they have pedestrian signals, are still so dangerous for pedestrians that they need special signage.

Policy 8.3.1 - Safety should be improved for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists throughout the entire community through infrastructure improvements (bike lanes, traffic calming, etc.), education, and enforcement efforts.

Policy 8.3.5 - Traffic calming measures should be employed where appropriate, especially in areas with congestion or high pedestrian traffic.

Issue 8.4 - More sidewalks are needed. Some streets have sidewalks on only one side but need them on both sides. Existing sidewalks need to be maintained and extended.

Policy 8.4.1 - Local regulations should be amended, where applicable, to include requirements for sidewalks and bike routes to be installed with new land disturbance activities, including subdivisions, new construction, or other developments.

Policy 8.4.2 - Budgets should include sidewalk, trail and bike lane construction and maintenance. Signage should be visible, all bike lanes should be clearly marked, and road shoulders should be kept clear of debris.

Issue 8.5 - Lack of education for cyclists and motorists regarding bicycling rules, regulations, and safety.

Policy 8.5.1 - Efforts should be made to improve safety for walking and cycling within the entire community through infrastructure improvements (bike lanes, traffic calming, etc.), education, and enforcement efforts.

Issue 8.6 - More bike lanes are needed. In many places striped bike lanes are insufficient and only protected bike lanes would be effective.

Policy 8.6.2 - Corridor improvements and potential reuse of abandoned rail rights-of way should be evaluated for alternative modes of transportation.

Issue 8.7 - The statewide law banning bicycles on sidewalks needs to be reconsidered because in many locations bicyclists are safer on sidewalks.

Policy 8.7.1 - Walking, biking, and accessible public transit should be considered viable and sustainable forms of transportation supported through appropriate land use and infrastructure decisions.

Policy 8.7.2 - Until the statewide law is addressed, investigate sidewalk and multi-purpose path design standards in an attempt to design future bicycle and pedestrian improvements that accommodate both modes of transportation.

Opportunities

Opportunity 8.4 - More public/private partnerships for transportation.

Opportunity 8.7 - Implement the Valdosta-Lowndes Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan and the Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan.

Opportunity 8.8 - Connect the sidewalks and widen them into multi-use paths so that they can be used by cyclists and pedestrians.

Opportunity 8.9 - State-designated bicycle routes (Georgia Bicycle Route 10) could be improved by infrastructure such as bike lanes or paved shoulders without rumble strips.

Appendix F: Goal 9 - Community Facilities and Services

Issues & Policies

Issue 9.7 - The Public Library needs to continue to be accessible by foot/bike/transit.

Policy 9.7.1 - Walking, biking, and accessible public transit should be considered viable and sustainable forms of transportation supported through appropriate land use and infrastructure decisions.

Issue 9.8 - The community needs more accessibility to local recreational opportunities and more recreational amenities, especially in underserved areas, for example: Soccer fields, basketball courts, skate rink, more kid-friendly options, community centers, and playground equipment.

Policy 9.8.1 - Public-private partnerships should be established to fund improvements to park and recreation facilities and programs, especially in the Designated Revitalization Area and near Public Housing.

Opportunities

Opportunity 9.4 - The area has abundant sunshine for solar energy generation as well as ample infrastructure for grid access. This provides an opportunity for increased use of alternative energy, which, along with education about how to conserve energy, could help to reduce utility costs.

Opportunity 9.5 - SPLOST is a possible source for funding utilities and infrastructure.

Appendix G: Goal 10 - Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues & Policies

Issue 10.1 - Need better coordination, communication, and resource sharing between the six local governments, the universities, and businesses.

Policy 10.1.1 - Cross-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration should be actively pursued to promote positive impacts of growth and development across jurisdictional boundaries, which is vital to a successful economy and a high quality of life.

Issue 10.4 - Struggle between full funding of programs and what community budgets can allow.

Policy 10.4.1 - Partnerships of local governments and service providers should be established to leverage and supplement requested state and federal funding.

Opportunities

Opportunity 10.7 Look for places where the duplication of common needs can be minimized through increased collaboration, such as joint use of facilities between schools and Parks and Recreation, and ongoing city/county collaboration that includes school boards.

Opportunity 10.9 – More public private partnerships (PPPs)