

Application Disclaimer

PRIOR TO STARTING YOUR APPLICATION, DID YOU REVIEW THE LCI GUIDEBOOK, AND DO YOU HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE?

We strongly recommend you review the [application guidebook](#) while filling out this application.

✓ Yes, I acknowledge that I reviewed the guidebook and fully understand the program as explained.

Section 1: Applicant Information

NAME OF ORGANIZATION

DeKalb County Government

NAME OF PRIMARY CONTACT PERSON

Brian Brewer

JOB TITLE

Planner, Senior - Long Range Planning

DEPARTMENT

Planning & Sustainability Department

ADDRESS

Development Services Facility
178 Sams Street, Building 1 - A3602
Decatur, Georgia 30030
United States

PHONE

(404) 371-9883

EMAIL

bnbrewer@dekalbcountyga.gov

Section 2: Type of Assistance

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

- Catalytic: Supports the revitalization of the community's existing or planned downtown district

Section 3: Project Information

NAME OF PROJECT

Stone Mountain Trail Master Plan

NAME OF LCI AREA AND LAST PLAN ADOPTION DATE

N/A

TOTAL COST OF PROJECT

\$400,000.00

PROPOSED LOCAL MATCH (MINIMUM 20% OF PROJECT COST)

\$80,000.00

PROJECT LOCATION/EXTENTS

Area along the Stone Mountain PATH Trail from Tucker-Summit CID To the Boundary of the Medline LCI Study Boundary

UPLOAD STUDY AREA MAP

- [stone-mountain-trail-lci-boundary.pdf](#)

HAS THIS PROJECT BEEN IDENTIFIED IN A PREVIOUS LCI STUDY, COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OR ANOTHER RECENTLY COMPLETED STUDY?

No

IS THE PROJECT WITHIN AN EXISTING LCI AREA?

No

PROVIDE A BRIEF STUDY GOAL AND DESCRIPTION. IN YOUR PROJECT DESCRIPTION, PLEASE BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE SPECIFIC PRODUCTS AND DELIVERABLES THAT THIS STUDY WILL CREATE.

This application is for a two-year Master Plan that we believe fits the LCI Program Goals listed in the Guidebook. The deliverables we hope to have will be in the form of:

Land Use and Zoning recommendations that foster diverse housing products, and the co-location of employment, recreation, cultural centers & nodes.

Transportation recommendations that enhance access to greenways/trails (PATH), transit, and enhance connectivity to institutions and gathering places.

And recommendations to create/improve public/private partnerships for the advocacy and implementation of the Master Plan Recommendations.

HOW DOES THIS PROPOSED LCI STUDY ADDRESS A NEED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

In this application, we believe we can bring together a broad array of stakeholders, many from historically marginalized communities including Clarkston's refugee population and legacy African American neighborhoods in Scottdale and Stone Mountain, as well as underserved populations passing through a dozen+ qualified census tracts and federal and state opportunity zones. Our goal is to focus on creating a shared planning paradigm of land-use changes that align with transportation plans and opportunities for new economic development in areas designated as redevelopment areas while responding to the housing displacement patterns that continue to force long-time residents out of their neighborhoods and price young, first-time homebuyers out of the market altogether. These challenges will only increase as the demand for homes near trails and greenspace continues to grow in the coming years (ironic because of the well-noted detractors of the Stone Mountain Trail in the planning and construction in the early 90s), further underscoring the need to reimagine the future of this area.

The opportunities for a more thoughtful review of zoning and design guidelines offer in essence a Beltline 2.0 opportunity.

HOW DOES YOUR LCI STUDY ADVANCE OR ADDRESS ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING LCI PRIORITIES. IF THE APPLICATION IS SELECTED, THE ANSWERS PROVIDED WILL BE INCORPORATED INTO THE LCI STUDY SCOPE. PROJECTS DO NOT NEED TO ADVANCE ALL OF THE LCI PRIORITIES.

Allow for more comprehensive land use and zoning district analysis, across multiple jurisdictions, to hone in on affordable and accessible housing opportunities. By learning from the housing mistakes made along other trail corridors, we will create a concerted focus on affordability, historic housing discrimination, and appropriated housing reparations for impacted African American communities, we will keep the dream of the original planners alive and revived for the next 30 years.

The LCI study will be guided by the ARC Regional Housing Strategy, and take an all-above approach to addressing the housing challenges residents are experiencing along this corridor. The opportunity for this LCI to build upon the DeKalb County Unified Development Plan (UDP), completed in the fall of 2022. The further refinement of the areas identified in the UDP will more logically integrate the long-term plan into practical action steps in achieving the overall vision.

Protecting legacy residents while inviting new community members to take advantage of affordable, diverse housing options.

NOTE: Attachment also addresses Creative Placemaking and Climate Change (Green Infrastructure)

ARC STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT LCI APPLICANTS ACTIVELY ENGAGE COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR LCI APPLICATION. LIST STAKEHOLDERS (E.G., COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOS), BUSINESSES AND/OR INSTITUTIONS, AND LOCAL OFFICIALS) INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS APPLICATION, AS WELL AS HOW THEY WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS, IF THE APPLICATION IS SELECTED.

Tucker-Summit CID will assist in outreach and Implementation

MARTA will assist in outreach and Implementation

Decide DeKalb (Development Authority) will assist in outreach and Implementation

City of Clarkston will assist in outreach and Implementation

Commissioner Terry's Office will assist in outreach and Implementation

WHO IN YOUR COMMUNITY HAS BEEN HISTORICALLY UNDER-REPRESENTED IN LOCAL PLANNING PROCESSES? HOW WILL THESE INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS BE INCLUDED IN THIS PLANNING PROCESS?

As mentioned above, the Refugee Community in Clarkston. Commissioner Terry will spearhead coordination with City of Clarkston Staff to prioritize outreach and involvement of the various communities in the greater Clarkston Area.

DeKalb County and MARTA Staff (who have done extensive outreach with diverse communities through the 2050 Unified Plan Process as well as various efforts along the Memorial Drive Corridor) will continue to tap contacts fostered through those efforts.

Section 5: Commitment

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

- [2023-2024-smt-mp-spt-dcmnts.zip](#)

Narrative:

A project ahead of its time, the Stone Mountain Trail was the first multi-use trail built by the PATH Foundation in the lead-up to the 1996 Olympics. The principles and goal of this forward-thinking trail connectivity route — to connect communities across East Metro Atlanta from the downtown core, through the municipalities of Decatur, Avondale Estates, Scottdale, Clarkston, Stone Mountain (at the time of the premier tourist attractions in the Southern United States), and large swaths of unincorporated DeKalb County — were a groundbreaking triumph of the era that have since gone on to become the planning norm for communities across the Metro Atlanta region. The Once and Future King? Did they know what no one else knew could or would happen? Or did they simply understand, as Victor Hugo wrote - “there is nothing like a dream of the future”? Regardless, the trail was built, the connections were made (with a few outstanding gaps here and there), and in the nearly 30 years since then, this trail has seen millions of miles of use from hundreds of thousands of residents, walkers, runners, and bicyclists, people of all ages, abilities and income levels. Commercial districts are connected with neighborhoods, with transit stations, and with parks and greenspace throughout the 18.4 miles from Centennial Olympic Park to Stone Mountain Park. In its own way, this was the first mobility project designed and built with equity in mind. While it’s tempting to see the PATH as nothing more than a wider-than-average sidewalk, planners and politicians alike see it’s for what it really is — a built environment that has the potential to awaken the soul and spirit of an interconnected community. Over the 30 years since this trail was built, that’s exactly what it has achieved. As communities from all backgrounds, religions, income brackets, and abilities have exchanged waves and hellos, a small drop in the bucket towards our shared vision of a united community, where the marginalized, and historically underserved have a seat at the table (or a welcomed role on the journey path!). Today, however, that dream is at risk as the housing crisis gripping the nation manifests itself in the areas directly alongside this trail. Aging housing stock and blighted industrial areas along the trail corridor are experiencing steadily increasing development pressure while displacement and gentrification threaten the vision of a global community connected. This incredible potential for this PATH to continue to be the once and future trail of our region is why we are applying for Catalytic LCI assistance for the 2023-2024 cycle. In this application, we believe we can bring together a broad array of stakeholders, many from historically marginalized communities including Clarkston’s refugee population and legacy African American neighborhoods in Scottdale and Stone Mountain, as well as underserved populations passing through a dozen+ qualified census tracts and federal and state opportunity zones. Our goal is to focus on creating a shared planning paradigm of land-use changes that align with transportation plans and opportunities for new economic development in areas designated as redevelopment areas while responding to the housing displacement patterns that continue to force long-time residents out of their neighborhoods and price young, first-time homebuyers out of the market altogether. These challenges will only increase as the demand for homes near trails and greenspace continues to grow in the coming years (ironic because of the well-noted detractors of the Stone Mountain Trail in the planning and construction in the early 90s), further underscoring the need to reimagine the future of this area. The opportunities for a more thoughtful review of zoning and design guidelines offer in essence a Beltline 2.0 opportunity. The positive aspects of the Beltline do exist and can be enhanced, on the current

version of the Stone Mountain Trail, and yet the same negative aspects are now emerging, such as an over-emphasis on luxury and high-income housing developments and displacement pressures. While the Beltline certainly took lessons from the FIRST trail, the first trail can take lessons from the lineage of trails that followed. Further refining the purpose and goals of the more connected community vision, and adapting itself for the next 30+ years.

This study will address these key priorities:

1. Allow for more comprehensive land use and zoning district analysis, across multiple jurisdictions, to hone in on affordable and accessible housing opportunities. By learning from the housing mistakes made along other trail corridors, we will create a concerted focus on affordability, historic housing discrimination, and appropriated housing reparations for impacted African American communities, we will keep the dream of the original planners alive and revived for the next 30 years.
 - a. The LCI study will be guided by the ARC Regional Housing Strategy, and take an all above approach to addressing the housing challenges residents are experiencing along this corridor. The opportunity for this LCI to build upon the DeKalb County Unified Development Plan (UDP), completed in the fall of 2022. The further refinement of the areas identified in the UDP will more logically integrate the long-term plan into practical action steps in achieving the overall vision. Protecting legacy residents while inviting new community members to take advantage of affordable, diverse housing options.
2. Promote creative placemaking - one of the true wonders of the Stone Mountain Trail is that it connects wealthy and working-class communities alike. It brings together the most diverse communities in America with the least diverse communities in America. It bobs and weaves its way through publicly-owned land and right of ways that are rife with the possibility for new designs that promote whatever the creative spirit of all the connected communities can imagine. The art, food, recreation, educational, and health, components already in place and active along this corridor can be unlocked to new and established audiences. Furthering the notion of if you build it will come, and when you build it with the people in mind, what dream of the future will emerge next?
 - a. Examples that have been suggested for review include the creation of an Arts District in the area around the DeKalb Farmers Market, that already boasts a wide array of art studios and warehouse spaces, located here mostly because of the affordability of studio space, but now is becoming increasingly expensive to work around. Other ideas that have been put forward involve micro recreation areas, such as basketball/soccer courts integrated along the trail for active recreation nodes, while also connecting several natural conservation areas for the passive recreation enthusiasts.
3. Strengthen and enhance the green transportation infrastructure along this corridor. Interestingly enough, this PATH straddles the eastern continental divide, a sincere moment of awe when one realizes the millions of years it took for the two landmasses to collide and produce the watershed and topographical features that command our landscapes today. By enhancing the Stone Mountain Trail, through a catalytic design and planning process, the investment made along this corridor can further strengthen

stormwater systems and resilient transportation infrastructure throughout Central DeKalb County. As the climate crisis hits our roads and waterways and neighborhoods in an increasingly erratic and destructive ferocity, we must plan for a future where climate disasters are the norm and do our part to reduce the causes of global warming, namely carbon from vehicle tailpipes. The enhancement of this corridor will literally create the incentive and the future community that wakes up in the morning with a true 50/50 choice - do I want to drive today, or bicycle/walk today. We can no longer build trails to nowhere, be content with unsafe bike and pedestrian routes to work, school, and commercial districts. If we don't build the rational and logical route to the places that our communities wish to travel to, then we will not truly be able to reverse the alarming trend of more carbon in our atmosphere.

- a. Examples of the enhanced green transportation infrastructure include investing in the existing trail network, laced with productive urban landscaping (permaculture and xeriscaping, etc) techniques that build up the soil for better stormwater retention, support native species habitats, and even promote negative carbon sinking tactics to establish a net-zero carbon framework for the entire corridor, and establishing the potential for trail spurs into established neighborhoods and new developments and open up the possibilities of a 20 minute suburb experience with walking, bicycling and even autonomous micro transit connections. The possibilities are endless, when partners like MARTA engage in the connections to the heavy rail stations and the viability of the REACH pilot to create true multimodal opportunities along this corridor.

Bringing it all together, this Catalytic LCI proposal represents an opportunity to bring together an incredibly diverse — both geographically and demographically — group in a joint planning process. The potential to create a multi-faceted stakeholder committee made up of residents from every background, income bracket, and zip code, united by their proximity to the PATH, and co-create a vision for the future is very exciting to use here in DeKalb County. It is rare for city and county leaders to come together for a project with this scope and intensity, but we have leaders in the public realm and the private market that see the opportunity to come together to build a dream of the future. The innovative spirit that led the original PATH leaders to push for a better future, for posterity, for the next generation is alive and kicking here in DeKalb County. The plans that will be co-created through this LCI project will give city and county policy makers and planners that community led will and financial justification to advance bold ideas in an area of Metro Atlanta teeming with potential. Together with the support of the ARC LCI program, we believe that we can jumpstart the once and future trail, the original, and if accepted a path to a more equitable, just, and resilient future for the Central DeKalb County communities.

About: PATH's first trail connected Olympic venues at Georgia Tech and Stone Mountain with at least a route and in many locations a treasured greenway trail.

The trail now begins at Centennial Olympic Park and travels through Freedom Park before becoming an on-street connection on moderately traveled streets through Candler Park and Lake Claire neighborhoods. The Stone Mountain Trail becomes a side path through Decatur and then a rails-to-trails greenway into Clarkston (over I-285). This trail is a side path to the outskirts of Stone Mountain Village. There are several blocks of sharing busy streets through the village to get to Stone Mountain Park. It is a busy trail suitable for families on weekends.



February 18th, 2023

Atlanta Regional Commission
229 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 100
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

RE: Catalytic LCI Funding Study Grant

Dear ARC Selection Committee:

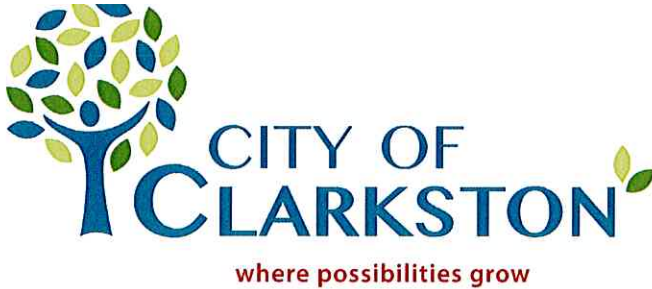
The Tucker Summit CID (TSCID) recommends the support of the ARC LCI program for the Stone Mountain Trail, aka PATH. This trail is an incredible connection for many communities throughout DeKalb County with pedestrian connectivity from Stone Mountain to Decatur and beyond. Although the PATH trail has a great “backbone”, the CID and the County believe there are many additional opportunities to enhance this PATH trail by assessing current and future employment and affordable and accessible housing within the PATH’s zone of influence. If awarded funding by ARC, the TSCID is of the understanding that the county study will also identify much needed improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure adjacent to the PATH corridor. More importantly, identifying these improvements in the study’s short and long range Action Plan will lead to future implementation.

Our CID is fortunate to have the PATH within its boundaries. Many people who work within the CID utilize this path and have noted the benefits of its availability and these benefits will also be a great value to the business community within the CID. This study will reinvigorate the trail’s connection with its residents, and local businesses to create a better future.

The CID looks forward to ARC’s award of the Catalytic Funding to DeKalb County and the CID’s participation on the Project Management Team.

Sincerely,

Emory Morsberger President
Tucker Summit CID



Mayor
Beverly H. Burks

City Council
Awet Eyasu
Jamie Carroll
Laura Hopkins
Debra Johnson
Yterenickia Bell
Susan Hood

February 15, 20223

Lauren Blaszyk
Planning Administrator, Community Development
Atlanta Regional Commission
regional impact + local relevance
229 Peachtree ST Suite 100
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Subject: **2023 Stone Mountain Trail Project- DeKalb County**

Dear Ms. Blaszyk:

On behalf of the City of Clarkston, please accept our letter of support for the **Stone Mountain Trail Project-DeKalb County** LCI application.

The County has made tremendous progress with being awarded the technical assistance implementation grant to fine tune the previous submittal. We hope that the fine-tuned collaborative efforts will allow granting of the funding requested under this program.

The Stone Mountain Trail is the first trail built by the PATH Foundation over 20 years ago. The city is excited that DeKalb County is seeking to expand and interconnect communities and cultures, by providing options to multi modal transportation and underserved areas creating a project that can in the future potentially a connection to the *Clarkston Greenway* project.

The creation of alternative and shared housing options and working spaces the “fresh air” approach will include areas that are in proximity to trails and greenspaces. Understanding that the project processes will also include updating and investing in stormwater retention systems, that can withstand the redevelopment invasion but most importantly bring together opportunities to be geographically and demographically connected.

The **Stone Mountain Trail Project –DeKalb County** has the unwavering support of the City of Clarkston, as we ask that the Atlanta Regional Commission acknowledges it support by approving the LCI grant application.

Sincerely,


Shawanna N. Qawiy
City Manager
City of Clarkston



Decide DeKalb
Development Authority

March 1, 2023

Atlanta Regional Commission
229 Peachtree Street, Suite 100
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Sir or Madame –

Decide DeKalb Development Authority, located in DeKalb County, Georgia, is a purpose-driven organization that helps advance job creation, comprehensive workforce training, and support to small and medium-sized businesses within the community. Our mission is to nourish our communities through opportunities and partnerships that foster growth, equity, and innovation. While the work to improve our neighborhoods can be long and arduous, our partners at DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability are committed to bringing vibrant, walkable communities to the county. For this reason, Decide DeKalb supports DeKalb County Government and the planning & sustainability department's request for funding through the Livable Centers Initiative (LCI).

Over the last year, DeKalb County has refreshed its technology offering and refined its scope of work for the Stone Mountain Park proposal. The 19-mile stretch of car-free paths and on-street bike lanes connecting Midtown Atlanta to Stone Mountain Park is the primary function of the Stone Mountain Trail. At this time, a proper study is needed to assess the current state of the Trail as well as identify a strategic approach that aligns with current trends and outliers.

We stand with DeKalb County Government in their grant request for an LCI study of the Stone Mountain Trail and look forward to seeing the results!

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Dorian R. DeBarr
President
Decide DeKalb Development Authority

February 20, 2023

Ms. Amy Goodwin
Principal Planner
Atlanta Regional Commission
229 Peachtree St., NE
Atlanta, GA 30303

Re: MARTA Letter of Support for
DeKalb Stone Mountain PATH Catalytic LCI Grant Application

Dear Ms. Goodwin:

Thank you and the Atlanta Regional Commission for last years' technical assistance to focus the Scope of Work of the LCI Study along the PATH Foundation Trail. I am writing to renew MARTA's support for DeKalb County's application for a Catalytic LCI study along the PATH Foundation multi-use trail from Decatur to Stone Mountain.

MARTA has several key employment centers along the route, including the Avondale Rail Yard and the Laredo Bus Facility. Continued land use and development planning on the corridor can help us recruit and train a more diverse workforce at these locations.

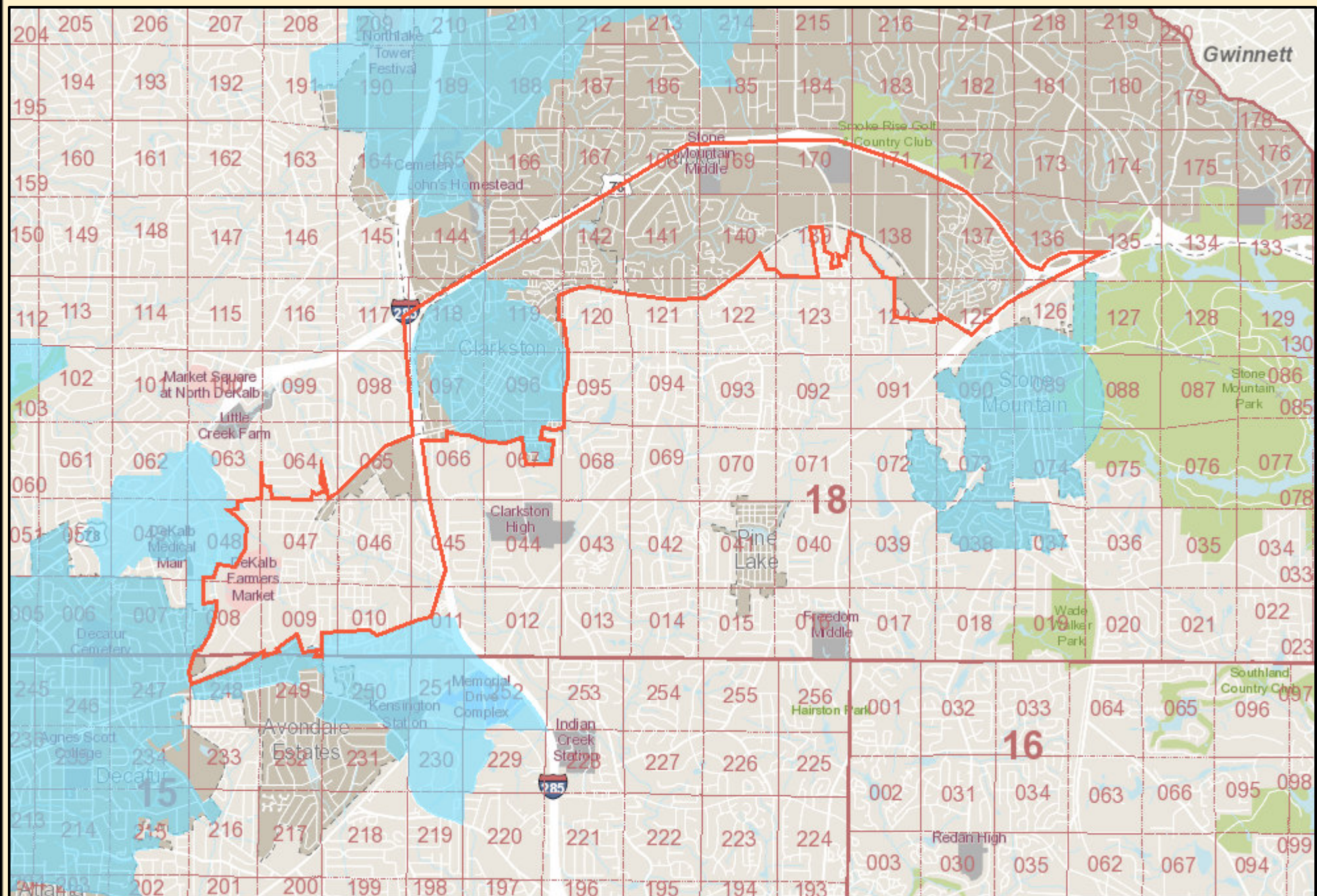
MARTA Bus Routes 8, 19, 119, and 125 intersect with the trail while Route 120 provides service along most of the corridor, which can help expand access and opportunity. Additionally, East Lake and Decatur rail stations can help provide regional access to this amenity.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Collie Greenwood
General Manager/CEO



Stone Mountain Trail LCI Boundary

0 0.3 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4
mi

Date Printed: 1/5/2023



DeKalb County GIS Disclaimer

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