

Knox to Oak Ridge

Greenway Master Plan

—2015—



Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....1

Conceptual Plan.....4

SECTION I. Introduction.....5

SECTION II. Existing Conditions of the Corridor.....6

The Natural Environment.....7

The Built Environment11

Opportunities & Constraints Maps.....17

SECTION III. Corridor Design.....28

Phasing Recommendations.....31

Conceptual Plan With Corridor Design Map Index.....32

Detailed Corridor Design Maps.....33

Overall Recommendations for Street Approaches and Crossings.....38

Phase 1: The Southeast Corridor Recommended Design Features.....41

Phase 2: The Central Corridor (Pellissippi Parkway) Recommended Design Features.....45

Phase 3: The Northern Corridor (Solway Area/Pellissippi Parkway Recommended Design Features).....48

Overall Design Character.....54

SECTION IV. Public Process56

June 2014 Workshop.....58

TDOT Workshop.....59

Preliminary Online Survey.....59

December 2014 Open House.....60

Final Online Survey.....61

SECTION V. The Economic Benefits of Greenways.....62

Case Study: The Tweetsie Trail Greenway.....65

Case Study: Maryville-Alcoa Greenway.....66

SECTION VI. Cost Estimates67

SECTION VII. Overall Corridor Recommendations.....72

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Knoxville TPO Signage Guidelines.....75

Appendix B. TDOT Stakeholder Workshop.....81

Appendix C. Rare Species by Tennessee Watersheds.....84

Appendix D. Public Feedback (Surveys).....91

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Vision

The vision of this plan is a recreation corridor of trails, plazas, employment centers, and natural areas that connect the Knoxville, Knox County, and Oak Ridge communities. The trails will help to recruit and connect corporate campuses, will serve schools, businesses, and places of worship, and will connect thousands of residents to recreation and transportation. The greenway trail can be a catalyst for corporate and commercial recruitment, increase walkability and decrease dependency on the car, and improve the health of thousands of individuals. This greenway can help conserve the natural gems it connects such as Beaver Creek, the Clinch River, Sinking Creek, and Ten Mile Creek. It can be a linear park transitioning to the innovative design of business and school plazas, pocket parks, and other public spaces. This greenway can recruit business as part of the Tennessee Technology Corridor, serving as a draw to major employers. This greenway can also serve schoolchildren and work commuters, allowing them to get from home to office and school without having to step foot in a car.

Challenges

There will be challenges to implementing this greenway trail. Public feedback has emphasized a desire for the greenway not to be placed adjacent to busy roads. This will require access through private lands. Fortunately, the corridor is lined by larger parcels and businesses whose owners may come to share this vision for a regional greenway. Other challenges include the significant barrier of the Solway Bridge/ Melton Hill Lake crossing, steep ridges, interplay with natural conditions like wetlands, and sinkhole-ridden areas, and the roughly \$8 million it may take to complete the 13-mile trail corridor.



The
regional
greenway
would connect thousands to
work, school, and play

The greenway can be a
catalyst for
corporate and
commercial
recruitment,
increasing walkability and
encouraging healthy activity

Knoxville area realtors
see a significant
increase in the
value of homes
that are near greenways

The Benefits

The Knox to Oak Ridge regional greenway has the potential to attract quality development, including single-family residential, apartments, and office campuses. Surveys by the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders have shown that trails rank as one of the top desired amenities among home buyers. Employers frequently choose locations where their employees have the option to walk or bike to work. Access to recreation and outdoor space is proven to aid in employee efficiency and retention. Local examples make evident the impact greenways can have on corporate relocations. The corporate headquarters of Ruby Tuesday and the high-tech firm ProNova Solutions both relocated near the Maryville-Alcoa Greenway, citing the greenway as a factor. Nationally, communities are investing more money to build greenways as means for recreation, natural resource protection, and as transportation for people of all physical abilities.

The Proposed Greenway

This plan illustrates existing conditions, opportunities and challenges, and proposed greenway design solutions. Both a preferred and alternative route have been identified. If a roadblock makes one section of the corridor infeasible, portions of the alternative route may come into play. The preferred corridor design proposes connections, trailhead locations, pedestrian/bicycle improvements at road crossings, interpretive areas, and road/waterway crossing improvements. As the corridor is designed in more detail, it is key to the greenway's character to ensure that the greenway is not an extraneous feature bordering developments, but a key and iconic feature of them. Further design can designate additional pocket parks as residential developments come in. As it is designed, elements of the greenway should reinforce a sense of place.

Partnerships Are Crucial

This greenway's success depends on strong partnerships with government, non-profit, and business organizations. The Tennessee Department of Transportation and the Tennessee Valley Authority are crucial early stakeholders to engage. Local businesses, health-care providers, and churches all have the potential to garner political support for this project as well as potentially provide right-of-way for the greenway. Much of the "heaviest lifting" may not be in the design portion of future phases but in garnering a critical mass of supporters to move this vision forward.

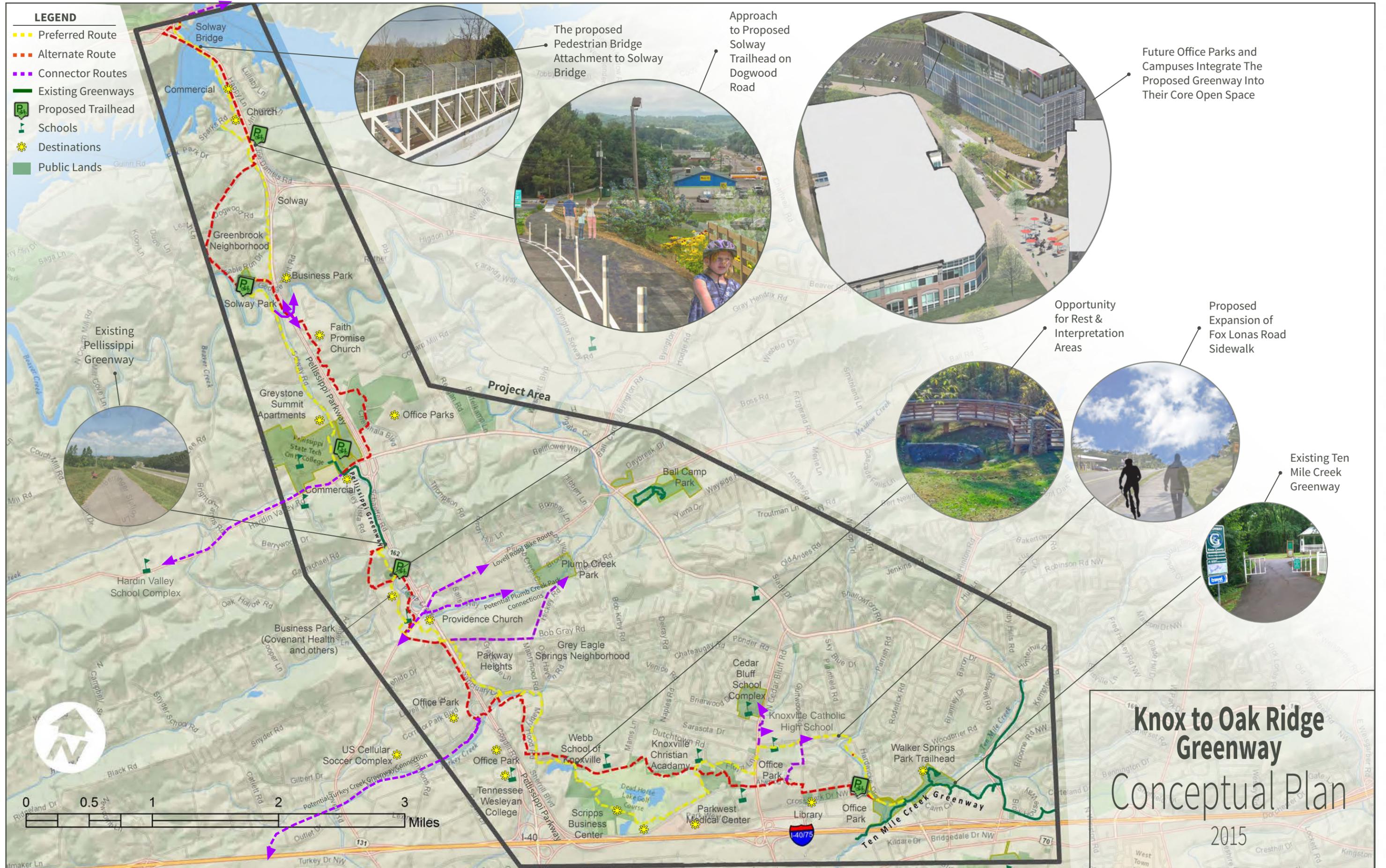
The greenway would
connect

7 schools,
many major
employers,
4 parks, and
3 existing
greenways

The greenway will

**protect
environmentally
sensitive areas
and help control
flooding issues**

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Knox to Oak Ridge Greenway Conceptual Plan

2015