

## Proctor Creek’s Boone Boulevard Green Street Project Health Impact Assessment (HIA)



### Background

Most areas in Atlanta, Georgia use a combined sewer system in which stormwater and sanitary sewer discharge flow underground together to a treatment facility. However, during heavy rains these systems can overflow, bypass the treatment facility, and discharge directly into a nearby waterbody. These combined sewer overflow (CSO) events are a big reason many rivers and streams in the area are considered to be impaired. Proctor Creek, which drains into the Chattahoochee River, is one of the most impaired waters in the area. Atlanta’s Department of Watershed Management (DWM) developed a plan, the proposed *Green Street Project*, which uses green infrastructure to help improve water quality in Proctor Creek. In order to provide the City with recommendations to maximize health benefits and mitigate health impacts of the proposed *Green Street Project*, a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was conducted.

### About HIAs

An HIA is a systematic process that uses data, analytical methods, and input from stakeholders in order to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on the health of a population. The HIA examines

who within the population will be impacted and provides recommendations for monitoring and managing those effects.

### About the Green Street HIA

The study area of this HIA is a half-mile radius around the proposed project site. According to the 2010 Census, there were 13,194 people, 82.3% of which were African-American, living within the study area. The HIA sought to determine how the proposed project would influence health factors for this population and others that are affected by the watershed.

To evaluate how the proposed *Green Street Project* would affect these health factors, the HIA team analyzed data such as census statistics, GIS mapping information, scientific literature, and expertise from public health professionals and stakeholders. The HIA Team also included local knowledge and information gathered from community members.

The team that conducted this HIA included staff and contractors from the U.S. EPA, an HIA advisor, a staff member from the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness, two researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and a university student

**Table 1. Health Factors Used to Evaluate the Proposed *Green Street Project* and Potential Health Benefits Identified**

Health Factors		Potential Public Health Benefits
Environmental	Water Quality	Reduced stormwater runoff and pollutant loading
	Flood Management	Stormwater management and reduced CSO events/flooding hazards
	Climate and Temperature	Shading and relief from local urban heat island effect
	Air Quality	Filtration of air pollutants
	Traffic Safety	Traffic calming and reduction in vehicle crashes and injury
	Exposure to Greenness	Increased exposure to greenness and the natural environment
	Exposure to Urban Noise	Possible traffic and street noise abatement
Social	Access to Goods and Services, Greenspace, and Healthcare	Improved mobility and access to goods and services
	Crime	Possible reduction in the risk of crime due to improved aesthetics/lighting
	Social Capital	Possible improvement in social capital along the Green Street
Economic	Household Economics	Possible increase in employment opportunities for green infrastructure installation and maintenance
	Community Economics	Possible benefit to businesses in the area due to improved walkability/bikeability, especially if the project signals revitalization of the area

who was also a resident in the community. The HIA also received guidance from an HIA Technical Advisory Group made up of representatives from state and local government, federal agencies, academic institutions and non-profit organizations.

**Main Findings and Recommendations**

The HIA found a number of connections between the proposed project, the health factors considered in the HIA, and health outcomes. The HIA demonstrated that the proposed *Green Street Project* would result in a potential net positive public health impact due to a number of environmental, social, and economic benefits (Table 1). The HIA’s long-term recommendations support expansion of green infrastructure projects in the Proctor Creek watershed, monitoring the impacts of those projects, and continued community-stakeholder collaboration to advocate for community needs.

**HIA Impact on the *Green Street Project***

This HIA brought together communities and decision-makers at the local, state, regional, and federal levels to promote health, equity, and sustainability. Since the HIA was published, the

City of Atlanta agreed to expand the length of the green street to maximize its predicted health benefits and *“committed to consider and incorporate the HIA’s recommendations in planning the green street project.”*

A number of HIA recommendations have been incorporated into the *Green Street Project* design and construction plans, including: selecting native species, incorporating complete streets in the design, maximizing “greenness,” adding infrastructure that promotes safety for pedestrians and cyclists, increasing street lighting, and providing employment opportunities for local residents and businesses.

**Where to Learn More**

The full *Proctor Creek’s Boone Boulevard Green Street Project Health Impact Assessment (HIA)* is located at [www.epa.gov/healthresearch/health-impact-assessments](http://www.epa.gov/healthresearch/health-impact-assessments).

**CONTACT:**

**FLORENCE FULK**, [fulk.florence@epa.gov](mailto:fulk.florence@epa.gov)  
 EPA, Office of Research and Development,  
[www.epa.gov/ord](http://www.epa.gov/ord)

**CAMILLA WARREN**, [warren.camilla@epa.gov](mailto:warren.camilla@epa.gov)  
 EPA, Region 4, Resource Conservation and Recovery  
 Division, Brownfields Program,  
[www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-epa-region-4-southeast](http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-epa-region-4-southeast)