City of Alpharetta
Georgia

AlphaLoop Multi-Use Path Pedestrian Bridge
Phase A, Section 2

Final Environmental Assessment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The City of Alpharetta, in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) and the National Park Service (NPS) Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), is considering a project to construct a pedestrian bridge to connect various sections of the AlphaLoop multi-use path system in Alpharetta, Fulton County, Georgia. This document complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and implementing regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508; NPS Directors Order #12 Handbook, *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making,* and the *LWCF Federal Financial Assistance Manual, Volume 69*.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to provide connectivity to the AlphaLoop multi-use path system through the construction of an elevated pedestrian bridge associated with Phase A, Section 2 of the AlphaLoop. The elevated pedestrian bridge is needed to close the gap between proposed segments and those constructed to date, providing complete connectivity between Old Milton Parkway to Haynes Bridge Road and further west to South Main Street. This project would facilitate the connection to Westside Parkway, providing access to businesses and multifamily residential housing. This portion of the AlphaLoop multi-use path connection is proposed to be constructed above existing grade on a drilled pier foundation to avoid or minimize impacts to streams, stream buffers, and floodplain resources.

The proposed multi-use path pedestrian bridge would provide individuals and families living in the Chelsea Walk, Haynes Park, and Atley neighborhoods access to the AlphaLoop. It would also provide continuity in the path system for connection to Downtown Alpharetta where over 1,600 new residential units have been constructed. Once complete, residents and employees in the vicinity would have pedestrian access via the AlphaLoop to the Alpharetta Public Safety Headquarters, Thompson Street Park, Brooke Street Park, Publix, the United States (U.S.) Post Office, Alpharetta City Hall, the Fulton County Library, and beyond.

The AlphaLoop was envisioned as a means to connect people to activity centers, parks, and jobs by a network of multi-use paths that provides safe alternatives to driving and offers recreational benefits. The proposed multi-use path pedestrian bridge would provide the vital connection for residents and area employees to a plethora of businesses, parks, and governmental facilities.

OVERVIEW OF THE ALTERNATIVES

Two alternatives are addressed in this Environmental Assessment (EA):

- No Action Alternative
- Preferred Action Alternative – Construction of the AlphaLoop multi-use path pedestrian bridge (Proposed Action)

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION

This EA contains a comprehensive evaluation of the existing conditions and environmental consequences of implementing the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative, as required by NEPA. **Table 2** in **Section 3.17** summarizes the impacts of the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative. Based on the evaluation of potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action and No Action Alternatives, neither alternative would result in significant impacts to any resource category. Therefore, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate and an environmental impact statement (EIS) would not be

required. No specific mitigation measures are necessary in order to reduce the effects of the Proposed Action to insignificant levels.

PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

NEPA ensures that environmental information is made available to the public during the decision-making process and prior to actions being taken. The premise of NEPA is that the quality of federal decisions will be enhanced if proponents provide information on their actions to state and local governments, tribal governments, and the public, and involve these entities in the planning process.

The Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 and Executive Order (EO) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, require federal agencies to cooperate with and consider state and local views in implementing a federal proposal.

The City of Alpharetta provided a Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA) to relevant federal, state, and local agencies, and Federally-Recognized Tribes. Agencies and tribes had an opportunity to provide comments or information concerning the Proposed Action during this initial scoping period. Responses received were considered and incorporated as appropriate into this document.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the draft final EA was published in the Atlanta Journal Constitution. Publication of the NOA initiated a 30-day public review period. Copies of the draft final EA were made available at the Fulton County Public Library, Alpharetta Branch, 10 Park Plaza, Alpharetta, Georgia, 30009. The draft final EA was made available at the following website address during the public review period: https://www.alpharetta.ga.us/government/departments/recreation-parks/alpha-loop---new/alpha-loop---documents. Comments to the draft final EA were accepted electronically and in writing. No comments were received during the review period.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information and analysis presented in this EA, both the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative would result in insignificant effects; therefore, the preparation of an EIS is not necessary and the issuance of a FONSI would be appropriate.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
dBA	A-Weighted Decibels
DOPAA	Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FY	Fiscal Year
GADNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS	National Park Service
SR	State Route
U.S.	United States
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

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CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE, NEED, BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Alpharetta, in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) and the National Park Service (NPS) Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), is considering a project to construct a pedestrian bridge to connect various sections of the AlphaLoop multi-use path system in Alpharetta, Fulton County, Georgia (**Figure 1**). This document complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and implementing regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508; NPS Directors Order #12 Handbook, *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making,* and the *LWCF Federal Financial Assistance Manual, Volume 69*.

1.2 PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of this project is to provide connectivity to the AlphaLoop multi-use path system through the construction of an elevated pedestrian bridge associated with Phase A, Section 2 of the AlphaLoop. The elevated pedestrian bridge is needed to close the gap between proposed segments and those constructed to date, providing complete connectivity between Old Milton Parkway to Haynes Bridge Road and further west to South Main Street (**Figure 2**). This project would facilitate the connection to Westside Parkway, providing access to businesses and multifamily residential housing. This portion of the AlphaLoop multi-use path connection is proposed to be constructed above existing grade to avoid or minimize impacts to streams, stream buffers, and floodplain resources.

The proposed multi-use path pedestrian bridge would provide individuals and families living in the Chelsea Walk, Haynes Park, and Atley neighborhoods access to the AlphaLoop. It would also provide continuity in the path system for connection to Downtown Alpharetta where over 1,600 new residential units have been constructed, including both rental and for sale property. Once complete, residents and employees in the vicinity would have pedestrian access via the AlphaLoop to the Alpharetta Public Safety Headquarters, Thompson Street Park, Brooke Street Park, Publix, the United States (U.S.) Post Office, Alpharetta City Hall, the Fulton County Library, and beyond.

The AlphaLoop was envisioned as a means to connect people to activity centers, parks, and jobs by a network of multi-use paths that provides safe alternatives to driving and offers recreational benefits. The proposed multi-use path pedestrian bridge would provide the vital connection for residents and area employees to a plethora of businesses, parks, and governmental facilities.

1.3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The City of Alpharetta created the Recreation Commission, a group of 5-9 City residents appointed by the Mayor and Council to guide the process of recreation and parks programs, as well as give residents the opportunity to attend meetings and comment on upcoming programs and activities. Staff brings forth topics, needs, and policies to the Recreation Commission for review, and these items are often then presented at Alpharetta City Council meetings. It is an opportunity for Recreation Department staff to educate the legislative body of the City about recreation needs and opportunities.

An intensive public participation process is used during the creation of the Alpharetta Recreation and Parks Master Plan every five years. This includes two public meetings that give the citizens, elected officials, and other community stakeholders the opportunity to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions. Key staff, elected officials, and members of the community steer the project. Recreation Department staff invites those partners who have the necessary knowledge and those who would benefit from learning about the community's recreation needs. To keep the community at large informed about the benefits of recreation and parks, the Recreation Department uses a variety of social media channels. The City of Alpharetta has

a YouTube channel found here: https://www.youtube.com/user/Alpharettagov/videos. Residents can also view the Recreation Commission meetings from this site. In addition, the department has a Facebook page and Twitter account.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) for the draft final EA was published in the Atlanta Journal Constitution. Publication of the NOA initiated a 30-day public review period. Copies of the draft final EA were made available at the Fulton County Public Library, Alpharetta Branch, 10 Park Plaza, Alpharetta, Georgia, 30009. The draft final EA was made available at the following website address during the public review period: https://www.alpharetta.ga.us/government/departments/recreation-parks/alpha-loop---new/alpha-loop---documents. Comments to the draft final EA were accepted electronically and in writing. No comments were received during the review period.

The AlphaLoop project is a perfect example of a community coming together, recognizing the value of park facilities. The City's Recreation, Community Development, and Public Works Departments all play a role in the creation of the AlphaLoop. The Community Development Department is spearheading the marketing and funding of the trail system; the Public Works Department is overseeing its construction; and the Recreation Department is in charge of its continued maintenance. Together, they are working with private developers across the City, many of whom are donating funds to the AlphaLoop construction or building sections within the borders of their own development. The North Fulton Community Improvement District helped fund the design of the trail. None of this would have been possible without the original investment in creating a conceptual master plan for the AlphaLoop. That was done with buy-in from the City's elected officials, support and feedback from the public, and continued investment from the community at large.

1.4 BACKGROUND

The AlphaLoop is a dynamic and transformative project for the City of Alpharetta; one aimed at connecting neighborhoods to activity centers, improve mobility, promote healthier lifestyles, and enhance the quality of life for everyone who lives, works, and spends time in the Alpharetta community. At its core, the AlphaLoop is a multi-use path looping through the City of Alpharetta and tying to amenities like the Big Creek Greenway, Downtown Alpharetta, Avalon, and the North Point District. The idea of the AlphaLoop was introduced in 2016, and has been a continuously expanding project since, with the first full section completed in 2020.

Expansion of the AlphaLoop project is currently underway. It begins with a connection along Old Milton Parkway, across from the U.S. Post Office and adjacent to the Chelsea Walk neighborhood. The path goes south from there several hundred yards to a point where it terminates in the woods. The path picks up again a few hundred feet away at the back of the Atley neighborhood and continues up to Haynes Bridge Road, where it crosses and continues to the new Maxwell Development (**Figure 3)**. The gap in the existing AlphaLoop multi-use path system consists of the proposed elevated section through streams, stream buffers, and floodplain area, which is the focus of this EA evaluation. In January 2021, the LWCF preliminarily awarded the City of Alpharetta 50% matching contributions to go towards constructing the elevated multi-use path pedestrian bridge. The LWCF Act Section 6(f) provides a 50% match to the City of Alpharetta's financial commitment for the installation of the elevated multi-use path pedestrian bridge apart of Phase A, Section 2 of the AlphaLoop multi-use path system (**Figure 4**). No existing LWCF Section 6(f) property is associated with the Proposed Action; therefore, Section 6(f)(3) conversion considerations are not necessary for this evaluation.

This project is anticipated to require 12 to 14 months of construction and to be completed and open to the public for recreational use by January 2023. Construction for this project would likely start in November 2021.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to assist the NPS in complying with NEPA regulations as well as evaluating the potential environmental consequence associated with the Proposed

Action and alternatives. This EA provides an evaluation of the existing natural and human environment, as well as the potential effects associated with implementation of the Proposed Action and alternatives. The EA has been written to provide context of the Proposed Action and alternatives to the public, tribal governments, and government agencies. This EA would allow the NPS to determine if the Preferred Action Alternative would require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or if a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

CHAPTER 2: DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

NEPA requires federal agencies to explore a range of reasonable alternatives aimed at addressing the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. Reasonable alternatives include alternatives that are "technically and economically practical or feasible and meet the purpose and need of the Proposed Action" (43 CFR § 46.420(b)). The alternatives under consideration must include a No Action Alternative as prescribed by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR Part 1502.14).

The alternatives analyzed in this document, in accordance with NEPA, are based on the result of internal and agency scoping. Alternatives and actions that were considered but would not be technically or economically feasible, would not meet the purpose of and need for the project, would create unnecessary or excessive adverse impacts on resources, or would conflict with the overall management of the path system or its resources were dismissed from detailed analysis. These alternatives or alternative elements and their reasons for dismissal are discussed in this chapter.

Two alternatives are considered in this EA:

- No Action Alternative
- Preferred Action Alternative – Construction of the AlphaLoop multi-use path pedestrian bridge (Proposed Action)

2.1 NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, no action would be taken, and the proposed multi-use path pedestrian bridge associated with Phase A, Section 2 of the AlphaLoop project would not be constructed. The AlphaLoop multi-use path system would remain segmented and non-contiguous, preventing residents and visitors from accessing the full range of recreational opportunities, community service facilities, neighborhoods, and businesses directly adjacent to the existing and proposed segments of the AlphaLoop. For these reasons, the No Action Alternative was not selected as the alternative of choice.

2.2 PREFERRED ACTION ALTERNATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ALPHALOOP MULTI-USE PATH PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE (PROPOSED ACTION)

Under the Preferred Action Alternative (or Proposed Action) a safe and environmentally responsible multi-use path pedestrian bridge would be constructed to connect the AlphaLoop to its other segments, facilitating connection to Westside Parkway, and providing access to businesses and multifamily residential housing. The Proposed Action would consist of a 12-foot-wide concrete path situated on drilled concrete piers for foundational support. Materials utilized for the Proposed Action are to be consistent with the adjacent path and other segments of the AlphaLoop multi-use path system. Construction efforts for the Proposed Action would include compliance with all local, state, and federal regulations, and permitting requirements. All maintenance activities would be the responsibility of the City of Alpharetta. The Proposed Action would require the selective cutting and trimming of the construction workspace (**Figure 3**) which would include the footprint of the proposed pedestrian bridge. No mass grading would occur as a result of this project.

The Proposed Action's location and design is based on an iterative development process which included concept route analysis, public involvement, and consideration of implementation constraints such as environmental resources, property acquisition requirements, construction feasibility, and cost.

Under the Proposed Action, the construction of the multi-use path pedestrian bridge would close the gap between the existing portions of the AlphaLoop from Old Milton Parkway to Haynes Bridge Road and further west to South Main Street in Downtown Alpharetta. The Proposed Action would accommodate connectivity of the path system for pedestrians utilizing it for access to recreation, community services,

housing, businesses, and restaurants. The scope of analysis for this EA is limited to actions detailed in the LWCF application associated with construction of the Proposed Action.

The City of Alpharetta's 2035 Comprehensive Plan (Plan) addresses recreation and conservation of natural resources. Natural, historical, and community resource preservation strategies are at the forefront of the Plan. The Proposed Action is consistent with the Plan's focus on environmental preservation measures through the following key strategies:

- Preservation of tree canopies (strategy 1.1)
- Ensuring a balance between the natural and built environment (strategy 1.2)
- Enlisting non-profit land trusts to preserve open space (strategy 1.4)
- Continued enforcement standards for tree protection, pathways, greenways, open space, and water quality protection (strategy 1.6)
- Pursuing methods to expand multi-use trail activity (strategy 3.2)

The Proposed Action would be consistent with the City of Alpharetta Recreation Department's mission to promote the highest quality recreation programs and park facilities to our citizens consistent with their core values of excellence, stewardship, integrity, service, and loyalty. For these reasons, the Preferred Action Alternative, or Proposed Action, was selected as the alternative of choice.

2.3 PREVIOUSLY DISMISSED ALTERNATIVES

As required by NEPA, alternatives and actions that were considered but would not be technically or economically feasible, would not meet the purpose of and need for the project, would create unnecessary or excessive adverse impacts on resources, or would conflict with the overall management of the path system or its resources are to be dismissed from detailed analysis. Alternatives not consistent with the City of Alpharetta's key strategies for recreation and conservation of natural resources were dismissed to focus the evaluation presented in the EA.

A third alternative was originally placed under consideration during the internal scoping and stakeholder coordination phase of this project. This alternative included the construction of the AlphaLoop multi-use path at existing grade within the project location (**Figure 2**). Under this alternative, a multi-use path would be constructed at existing grade to connect the AlphaLoop to its other segments and facilitate the connection to Westside Parkway. This alternative would require grading and installation of a 12-foot-wide concrete path within and directly adjacent to floodplain, stream, and stream buffer resources. This alternative would not meet the key strategies identified in the City of Alpharetta's Plan and may result in unnecessary adverse impacts to natural resources; therefore, it was eliminated from further consideration and analysis.

CHAPTER 3: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

3.1 RESOURCES DISMISSED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS

The following issues and topics are not considered to be potentially significant, critical to choosing between alternatives, or controversial. Therefore, they were eliminated from further analysis in this EA. A brief rationale for dismissal is provided for each topic.

Marine/Estuarine Resources
Marine and estuarine resources do not exist within the vicinity of the Proposed Action. Therefore, there would be no impact to marine or estuarine resources under either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative, and further consideration is not warranted.

Species of Special Concern and Habitat
Per coordination with GADNR and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), there are no species or habitats of special concern in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Action. There would be no impact to species of special concern or associated habitat under either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative, and further consideration is not warranted.

Unique Ecosystems
Per coordination with GADNR and USFWS, there are no natural communities, plants, or animals with priority conservation in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Action. There would be no impact to unique ecosystems under either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative, and further consideration is not warranted.

Unique Wildlife and Associated Habitats
Per coordination with GADNR and USFWS, there are no unique wildlife or associated habitats in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Action. There would be no impact to unique wildlife or associated habitats under either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative, and further consideration is not warranted.

Unique Fish and Associated Habitats
Per coordination with GADNR and USFWS, there are no unique fish or associated habitats in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Action. There would be no impact to unique fish or associated habitats under either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative, and further consideration is not warranted.

Historical and Cultural Resources
There would be no impact to historical or cultural resources under either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative, and further consideration is not warranted. The Georgia Historic Preservation Division also noted that no historic resources are likely to be affected by the Proposed Action.

Energy Resources
There would be no impact to energy resources under either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative, and further consideration is not warranted.

Agency or Tribal Land Use Plans

There would be no impact to agency or tribal land use plans under either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative, and further consideration is not warranted.

Hazardous Materials

A review of the NEPAssist database revealed no indication of previous or current hazardous waste materials located in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Action. There would be no impact to hazardous materials under either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative, and further consideration is not warranted.

3.2 GEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment

The primary soil unit (74.6 percent) within the vicinity of the Proposed Action is Cartecay-Toccoa complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes, occasionally flooded (CaA). Another 20.3 percent is depicted as urban land (Ub); however, this area is adjacent to a residential development and remains forested. The remaining 5 percent is Rion sandy loam, 10 to 15 percent slopes (ReD) (**Figure 5**) (NRCS, 2021).

Cartecay-Toccoa complex soils are described as nearly level soils located within floodplains. The Cartecay soil component comprises approximately 48 percent of the map unit and is classified as somewhat poorly drained. The Toccoa soil component comprises approximately 43 percent of the map unit and is classified as moderately well drained. Within the vicinity of the Proposed Action, the soil underlays forest (NRCS, 2008).

Urban land is comprised of areas that have been changed by grading, cutting, and filling. Commercial and residential buildings, parking lots, and roadways exist in these areas. The land area within the vicinity of the Proposed Action area remains forested but is adjacent to an existing residential development (NRCS, 2008).

Rion sandy loam soils are described as well drained, strongly sloping soils on shoulders and backslopes of hills. Within the vicinity of the Proposed Action, the soil underlays forest (NRCS, 2008).

The Proposed Action is located within the Appalachian Highlands Physiographic Region, Piedmont Province, and Piedmont Upland (4a) Section (USGS, 2021a). The elevation within the Proposed Action area is mostly flat, averaging 1,060 feet above sea level (USGS, 2020).

Environmental Impacts

The Proposed Action is planned to be constructed above existing grade on a drilled pier foundation to avoid impact to existing soils and topography. Mechanized land clearing, including clearing and grubbing, would occur within the vicinity of the Proposed Action to prepare the land surface for the installation of the pedestrian bridge. Any and all disturbed soils would remain on the site and used to assist in returning contours to pre-existing conditions once construction is completed. Introduction of soils from offsite are not proposed. There would be negligible, direct, short-term, adverse impacts to soils under the Proposed Action due to soil disturbance during construction and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (40 CFR 50) pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment for compliance under the Clean Air Act (CAA) (USEPA, 2021). The CAA identifies primary and secondary standards. Primary

standards provide public health protection, including protecting the health of "sensitive" populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. Secondary standards provide public welfare protection, including protection against decreased visibility and damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings. National Ambient Air Quality Standards have been set for six principal pollutants or criteria air pollutants. These six pollutants are:

- Carbon Monoxide (CO) – Primary Standard;
- Lead (Pb) – Primary and Secondary Standards;
- Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) – Primary and Secondary Standards;
- Ozone (O_3) – Primary and Secondary Standards;
- Particle Pollution (PM) – Primary and Secondary Standards; and
- Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2) – Primary and Secondary Standards.

An examination of the most recent information for nonattainment areas by county (May 31, 2021) indicates that Fulton County is in attainment for all criteria pollutants with the exception of 8-hour Ozone (USEPA, 2021).

Environmental Impacts

During construction, dust, and vehicle emissions related to construction activities and transport of construction materials and personnel may temporarily affect local air quality. Air movement would rapidly dissipate hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxide, and sulfur dioxide emissions. Overall, degradation to local air quality would be slight and temporary as a result of dust generated from construction activities, but these effects would be localized and minimal. Construction and operation of the Proposed Action is not anticipated to be a contributing factor leading to nonattainment for any air quality standard. There would be negligible, direct, short-term, adverse impacts to air quality under the Proposed Action due to construction activities and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.4 SOUND

Affected Environment

The City of Alpharetta Noise Ordnance is detailed in Section 26-114 of the City of Alpharetta Code of Ordinances (City of Alpharetta, 2021), provided below:

> *No person shall cause, suffer, allow, or permit the operation of any sound source in such a manner as to create a sound level that exceeds the sound level limits set forth in Table 1 when measured at or within the real property line of the receiving property using the slow response setting unless otherwise noted. Such a sound source would constitute a noise disturbance.*

Table 1. Sound Level Limits by Receiving Property

Receiving Property Category	Time	Sound Level Limits (dBA)
Residential or Noise Sensitive Facility	7:00 am – 11:00 pm	60
	11:00 pm – 7:00 am	55
Commercial or Business	7:00 am – 11:00 pm	65
	11:00 pm – 7:00 am	60
Industrial or Manufacturing	At all times	70

The Proposed Action is located in a forested area directly adjacent to urban and residential developments, and is on land currently zoned for residential and office use. The Proposed Action is also within a quarter mile southeast of two major roadways: State Route (SR) 120 and Haynes Bridge Road. The current level of use of existing pedestrian paths is expected to generate very low levels of noise that are appropriate and in compliance with the City of Alpharetta's noise requirements. The Proposed Action is located adjacent to roadways, neighborhoods, and commercial offices. Noise from these off-site areas dominate the soundscape within the vicinity of the Proposed Action. The current use of the existing trails creates minimal noise relative to the off-site noise from adjacent roadways and developments.

Environmental Impacts

Assessing impacts of noise involves several factors, including frequency, content, time of day during which noise occurs, duration, and loudness of the noise. According to the EPA (1974), an equivalent A-weighted sound level of 70 dBA over a 24-hour period is the noise level known to cause hearing loss with prolonged exposure. Therefore, a significant noise impact would entail exposing noise sensitive receptors to sound levels equivalent to, or greater, than this level. There are no noise-sensitive receptors in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Action. Noise generation would last only for the duration of construction activities. There would be negligible, direct, short-term, adverse impacts to noise under the Proposed Action due to construction activities and recreation, and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.5 WATER QUALITY & QUANTITY

Affected Environment

The Proposed Action area is located within the Upper Chattahoochee Watershed, or Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC-8) 03130001, within the Middle Big Creek sub-basin (HUC-12 031300011003; USGS 2021b). A delineation of jurisdictional waters in the vicinity of the Proposed Action was conducted in August 2017. Two streams (one perennial and one intermittent) and their associated 25-foot State-regulated buffers were identified within the Proposed Action area. No stream resource within one mile downstream of the Proposed Action is listed on the 2020 Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List of Impaired Waters (GAEPD, 2020). Of the approximate 0.29-square mile catchment area draining to the perennial and intermittent stream associated with the Proposed Action area, 80 percent is classified as urban or developed land and 44.1 percent is associated with impervious surfaces (USGS, 2021c).

Environmental Impacts

The Proposed Action would be constructed above existing grade on a drilled concrete pier foundation to minimize potential impacts to streams, stream buffers, and floodplain resources. Minor land disturbing activity would occur to construct the pedestrian bridge crossing; however, the Proposed Action would be constructed in a manner that would minimize clearing, floodplain, and stream buffer impact to the greatest extent practicable. As the Proposed Action involves completely spanning stream resources, there would be no impacts to either stream within the Proposed Action area. The impervious surface contributions associated with the drilled pier foundation for the proposed pedestrian bridge structure would be insignificant considering the overall watershed catchment drainage area. The impervious surface associated with the Proposed Action is not anticipated to significantly alter water quality, water quantity, nor composition of the land surface within this drainage basin. There would be negligible, direct, short and long-term, adverse impacts to water quality and quantity under the Proposed Action due to soil disturbance during construction and post-construction negligible increase in impervious surface drainage contribution. There would be no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.6 STREAM FLOW CHARACTERISTICS

Affected Environment

There are two streams (one perennial and one intermittent) with associated State-regulated 25-foot buffers within the Proposed Action area. Under the Proposed Action, one perennial stream would be spanned via a pedestrian bridge.

Environmental Impacts

The Proposed Action area is associated with stream, stream buffers, and floodplain resources. The Proposed Action has been selected as the Preferred Action Alternative as it is the least environmentally impactful option to facilitate the connection of the various sections of the AlphaLoop multi-use path system. The Proposed Action would include the installation of drilled pier foundations and a pedestrian span bridge to minimize impacts to stream buffers and floodplain resources. Under the Proposed Action, the stream resources would be completely avoided and result in no impact.

A Hydraulic Engineering Bridge and Flood Study Report for the Proposed Action was prepared in May 2020. The report found that the Proposed Action is designed to avoid potential stream impacts from the perpendicular bridge crossing and would achieve a no-rise condition.

There would be negligible, direct, short-term, adverse impacts to stream flow characteristics under the Proposed Action due to construction and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.7 FLOODPLAINS & WETLANDS

Affected Environment

The Proposed Action area is located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panel 13121C0058F. The majority of the Proposed Action area is located within the FEMA Zone AE 100-year floodplain and regulatory floodway (**Figure 6**) (FEMA, 2020).

Ecologists from Pond and Company conducted a jurisdictional waters delineation as described in **Section 3.5.** Wetlands were classified in accordance with the United States Army Corps of Engineers 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual and the 2012 Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Eastern Mountains and Piedmont Region (Version 2.0). No wetland resources were identified within the Proposed Action area.

Environmental Impacts

The Proposed Action would be constructed above existing grade on a drilled pier foundation to minimize potential impacts to wetlands and floodplain resources.

A Hydraulic Engineering Bridge and Flood Study Report for the Proposed Action was prepared in May 2020. The report found that the Proposed Action is designed to avoid potential stream impacts from the perpendicular bridge crossing and would achieve a no-rise condition.

There would be negligible, direct, short-term, adverse impacts to floodplains under the Proposed Action due to soil disturbance and construction, and no impact under the No Action Alternative. Based on the layout of the larger AlphaLoop multi-use path, the need for a connecting corridor in this general location, and the location of FEMA flood zones in the vicinity, there are no practicable alternatives which would fully avoid floodplains. The Proposed Action has been designed to avoid and minimize impacts to floodplains to the greatest extent practicable. As there are no wetlands located within the Proposed Action area, there would be no impacts under the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative.

3.8 LAND USE

Affected Environment

Areas near the vicinity of the Proposed Action are currently zoned for residential (single-family and multifamily), and office (professional and institutional) use. Nearby existing paths are zoned in the same fashion. Land within the vicinity of the Proposed action is made up of mixed pine-hardwood forest located between residential developments and commercial/office developments (AlphaGIS, 2021).

Environmental Impacts

Due to the Proposed Action, minimal clearing of forested area would be required. Some land cover (less than one acre) would change from mixed pine-hardwood forest to recreation/open space. The City of Alpharetta is not proposing to change the current zoning for residential and office use. There would be negligible, direct, long-term, beneficial impacts to land use under the Proposed Action due to the addition of recreational space and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.9 CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Affected Environment

Currently, there is a gap between proposed and constructed segments of the AlphaLoop multi-use path system between Old Milton Parkway and Haynes Bridge Road. The Proposed Action would also facilitate the connection to Westside Parkway, providing access to businesses and multifamily residential housing.

Environmental Impacts

The Proposed Action would provide individuals and families living in the Chelsea Walk, Haynes Park, and Atley neighborhoods access to the AlphaLoop multi-use path system. It would also provide continuity in the path system for connection to Downtown Alpharetta where over 1,600 new residential units have been constructed, including both rental and for sale property. Once complete, residents and employees in the vicinity would have pedestrian access via the AlphaLoop to the Alpharetta Public Safety Headquarters, Thompson Street Park, Brooke Street Park, Publix, the U.S. Post Office, Alpharetta City Hall, the Fulton County Library, and beyond, increasing walkability and recreation opportunities for residents of this area. There would be negligible, direct, long-term, beneficial impacts to circulation and transportation under the Proposed Action due to increased pedestrian path connectivity and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.10 INTRODUCTION OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment

The land area in the vicinity of the Proposed Action area consists of mixed pine-hardwood forest located between residential and commercial/office developments. Some populations of invasive species such as Chinese Privet (*Ligustrum sinense)* exist but are not overbearing the existing ecosystems.

Environmental Impacts

Implementation of the Proposed Action is not anticipated to introduce any invasive species into the project area. Appropriate measures would be taken during construction to establish permanent vegetation suitable for the Piedmont region of Georgia, limiting the establishment of invasive species. There would be no impact to invasive species presence under either the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative.

3.11 RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment

There is currently a gap in the existing AlphaLoop multi-use path between the Old Milton Parkway and Haynes Bridge Road segments. The Proposed Action would also facilitate a connection to Westside Parkway, providing access to businesses and multifamily residential housing. No other recreational resources are in the vicinity of the Proposed Action.

Environmental Impacts

The Proposed Action would improve the connectivity of existing recreational resources in the area as described in **Section 3.9 Circulation and Transportation**. There would be negligible, direct, long-term, beneficial impacts to recreational resources under the Proposed Action due to addition of recreational space and connectivity, and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.12 ACCESSIBILITY

Affected Environment

The existing environment of the AlphaLoop multi-use path involves two segments ending in the vicinity of the Proposed Action. There is currently no bridge connection to cross the stream and floodplain complex to allow continuous pedestrian traffic flow along the trail system.

Environmental Impacts

The proposed multi-use path pedestrian bridge would provide individuals and families living in the Chelsea Walk, Haynes Park, and Atley neighborhoods access to the AlphaLoop. It would also provide continuity in the path system for connection to Downtown Alpharetta where over 1,600 new residential units have been constructed, including both rental and for sale property. Once complete, residents and employees in the vicinity would have pedestrian access via the AlphaLoop to the Alpharetta Public Safety Headquarters, Thompson Street Park, Brooke Street Park, Publix, the U.S. Post Office, Alpharetta City Hall, the Fulton County Library, and beyond. There would be negligible, direct, long-term, beneficial impacts to accessibility under the Proposed Action due to pedestrian path connectivity and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.13 AESTHETICS

Affected Environment

The vicinity of the Proposed Action area is comprised of mixed pine-hardwood forest and is adjacent to residential and office developments. The Proposed Action would provide connectivity between two adjacent existing and proposed segments of the AlphaLoop multi-use path system.

Environmental Impacts

Minor clearing of trees and vegetation (less than one acre) would be required for the Proposed Action. However, the Proposed Action is anticipated to result in a net positive impact on aesthetics of the area by connecting sections of the AlphaLoop multi-use path system that were previously unfinished. There would be negligible, direct, long-term, beneficial impacts to aesthetics under the Proposed Action due to the creation of a unified path which are currently segmented, and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.14 SOCIOECONOMICS

Affected Environment

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 budget City of Alpharetta citywide budget totals $140 million, over half of which comes from the City general fund. This funding comes from a variety of sources including user fees, property taxes, local option sales taxes, permits and licenses, grant funding, and licenses/permits (City of Alpharetta, 2020). The estimated median household income in 2019 was $113,802 with a per capita income of $58,377 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

Environmental Impacts

The Proposed Action would benefit the local economy during construction, resulting from incidental spending in the local area by construction workers. Any additional jobs generated as a result of the Proposed Action would be temporary, construction-based positions. This would result in a negligible change in the local economy, as compared to existing conditions. Additionally, the Proposed Action would benefit the local economy post-construction as it would facilitate greater pedestrian connectivity to local businesses. There would negligible, direct, short and long-term, beneficial impacts to socioeconomics under the Proposed Action and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.15 MINORITY AND LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS

Affected Environment

The entirety of the Proposed Action is located in Census Tract 116.16 of Fulton County, Georgia. This population comprising this tract is approximately 47.1% minority and 7.1% of residents live beneath the poverty threshold. Comparatively, Fulton County demographics are approximately 60.4% minority and 14.4% of residents live beneath the poverty threshold (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

Environmental Impacts

Environmental justice impacts are not anticipated as a result of this project. Both the percentages of minority population and percentage of residents beneath the poverty threshold are lower than Fulton County. Additionally, the project is intended to help facilitate access for people in the vicinity of the Proposed Action, and therefore would serve as a benefit for any disadvantaged population. There would be negligible, direct, long-term, beneficial impacts to minority and low-income populations under the Proposed Action due to improving mobility and recreational accessibility for local populations and no impact under the No Action Alternative.

3.16 MITIGATION MEASURES AND CONCLUSIONS

All resource categories evaluated in this EA resulted in a finding of insignificant or no impact; therefore, mitigation measures are not necessary. Compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations and requirements would occur, as necessary. Measures such as avoidance, limitation of action, restoration, protection and maintenance, replacement/ compensation, and adaptive management strategies may be utilized, as appropriate, during the implementation of the Proposed Action to further protect resources. However, no specific mitigation measures are necessary in order to reduce the effects of the Proposed Action to insignificant levels.

Based on the information and analysis presented in this EA, both the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative would result in insignificant effects; therefore, the preparation of an EIS is not necessary and the issuance of a FONSI would be appropriate.

3.17 COMPARISON OF EFFECTS

Table 2 provides a comparison of the anticipated environmental, social, and human resource effects of the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative.

Table 2. Summary of Environmental Impacts for the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative

Impact Category	Proposed Action Degree of Impact			No Action Alternative Degree of Impact			EA Section Where Details Are Discussed
	Significant	Insignificant	No Impact	Significant	Insignificant	No Impact	
Marine/Estuarine Resources			X			X	Section 3.1
Species of Special Concern and Habitat			X			X	Section 3.1
Unique Ecosystems			X			X	Section 3.1
Unique Wildlife and Associated Habitats			X			X	Section 3.1
Unique Fish and Associated Habitats			X			X	Section 3.1
Historical and Cultural Resources			X			X	Section 3.1
Energy Resources			X			X	Section 3.1
Agency or Tribal Land Use Plans			X			X	Section 3.1
Hazardous Materials			X			X	Section 3.1
Geological Resources		X				X	Section 3.2
Air Quality		X				X	Section 3.3
Sound		X				X	Section 3.4
Water Quality and Quantity		X				X	Section 3.5
Stream Flow Characteristics		X				X	Section 3.6
Floodplains and Wetlands		X				X	Section 3.7
Land Use		X				X	Section 3.8
Circulation and Transportation		X				X	Section 3.9
Introduction of Invasive Species			X			X	Section 3.10
Recreational Resources		X				X	Section 3.11
Accessibility		X				X	Section 3.12
Aesthetics		X				X	Section 3.13
Socioeconomics		X				X	Section 3.14
Minority and Low-Income Populations		X				X	Section 3.15

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CHAPTER 4: LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL PERMITS REQUIRED

A City of Alpharetta land disturbance permit would be required prior to construction. Coverage under the applicable Georgia National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction stormwater permit would be obtained if the Proposed Action, or the associated AlphaLoop expansion, would result in greater than one acre of land disturbance. The Hydraulic Engineering Bridge and Flood Study Report for the Proposed Action from May 2020 found that the Proposed Action is designed to avoid potential stream impacts from the perpendicular bridge crossing and would achieve a no-rise floodplain condition. The Proposed Action would include the installation of drilled pier foundations and a pedestrian span bridge to minimize impacts to stream buffers and floodplain resources. As the Proposed Action involves the installation of roadway drainage structure, as defined by the Georgia Buffer Variance Procedures and Criteria (391-3-7.05), a stream buffer variance application or approval is not required by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. Additionally, there would be no work in waters and no Clean Water Act Section 404 permit would be required.

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CHAPTER 5: COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

5.1 AGENCY CONSULTATION

Federal, state, and local agencies, Federally-Recognized Tribes, and interested stakeholders were contacted to solicit preliminary comments and to help inform the preparation of this EA. Agencies were provided a 30-day period to review the Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA) and provide the preparers of this document any relevant information known by the agency regarding the location of the Proposed Action. Comments provided by agencies were incorporated into this EA, as appropriate. **Table 3** below includes agencies contacted as a part of the agency consultation effort.

Table 3: Agencies Contacted for Consultation

Agency	**Point of Contact**
Cherokee of Georgia Tribal Council, Inc.	Francis Martin McGahee
Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee, Inc.	Lucian Sneed, Ph.D.
Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe	Principal Chief Marian McCormick
Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Wildlife Conservation Section	Maggie Hunt
Georgia Environmental Protection Division	Victoria Adams
United States Fish and Wildlife Service; Georgia Ecological Services Field Office	Meghan Hadeen
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Office Official
Georgia Department of Community Affairs, State Historic Preservation Office	Jennifer Dixon
Fulton County Board of Commissioners	Bob Ellis
Atlanta Regional Commission	Patrick Bradshaw
City of Alpharetta; Floodplain Manager	Jill Bazinet
Fulton County Department of Public Works	David E. Clark

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5.2 PREPARATION

This EA was prepared by Pond and Company on behalf of the City of Alpharetta. The staff listed below provided key roles in the preparation of this EA and associated documentation and coordination.

Glenn Martin, CE	Pond and Company Project Manager
Taylor Jordan	Environmental Scientist
Alex Darr	Environmental Scientist
Paige Green	Environmental Scientist

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CHAPTER 6: REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A: FIGURES

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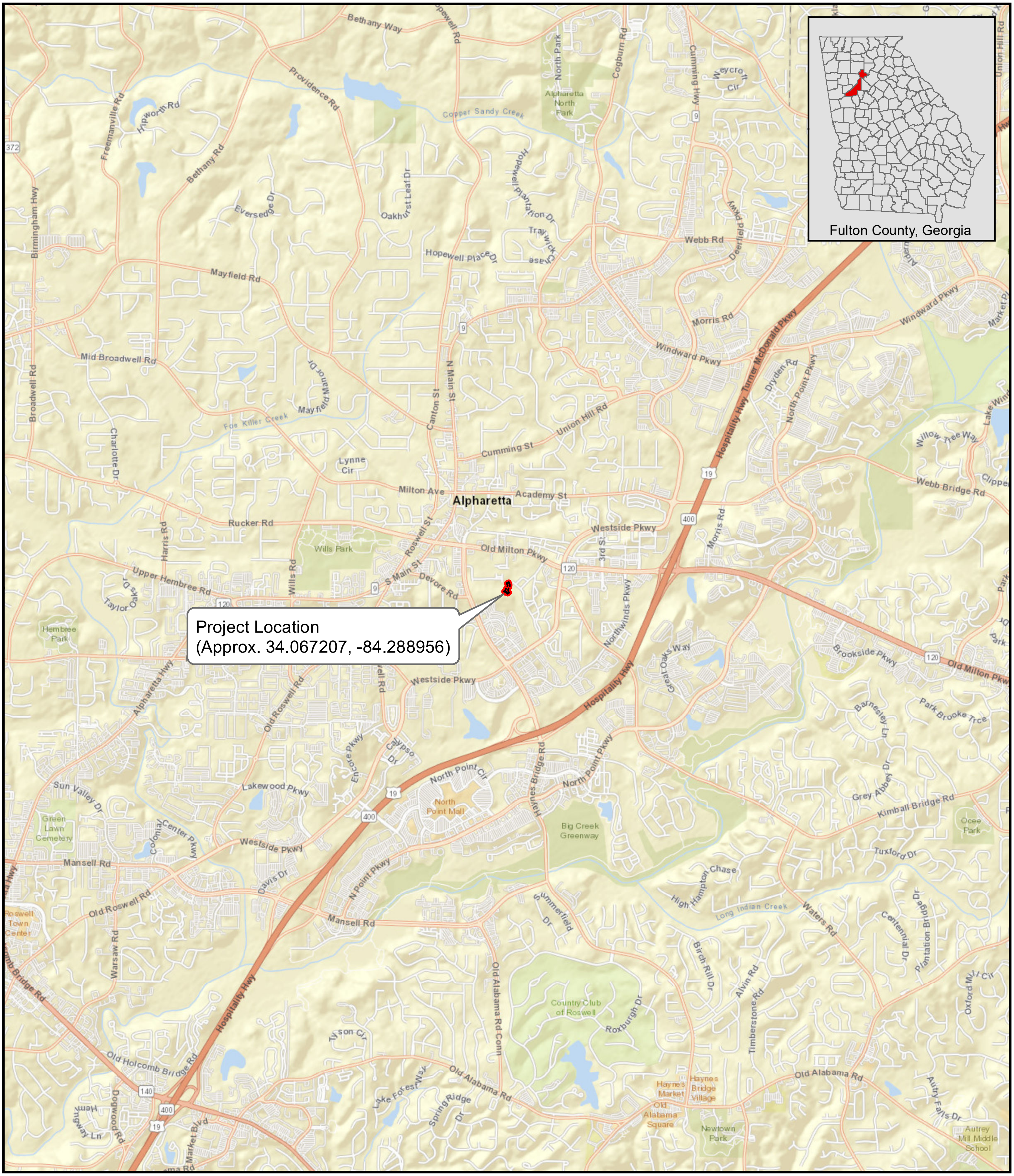

Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Figure 1
Project Vicinity Map

AlphaLoop Multiuse Path Project Pedestrain Bridge
Fulton County, Georgia
August 2021

POND
THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA

N

0 2,000 4,000 Feet

0 650 1,300 Meters

1 in = 4,000 ft

Service Layer Credits: © 2021 Microsoft Corporation © 2021 Maxar ©CNES (2021) Distribution Airbus DS © 2021 TomTom

Figure 2
Project Location Map

POND

THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA

0 150 300 Feet

0 50 100 Meters

1 in = 300 ft

AlphaLoop Multiuse Path Project Pedestrain Bridge
Fulton County, Georgia
August 2021

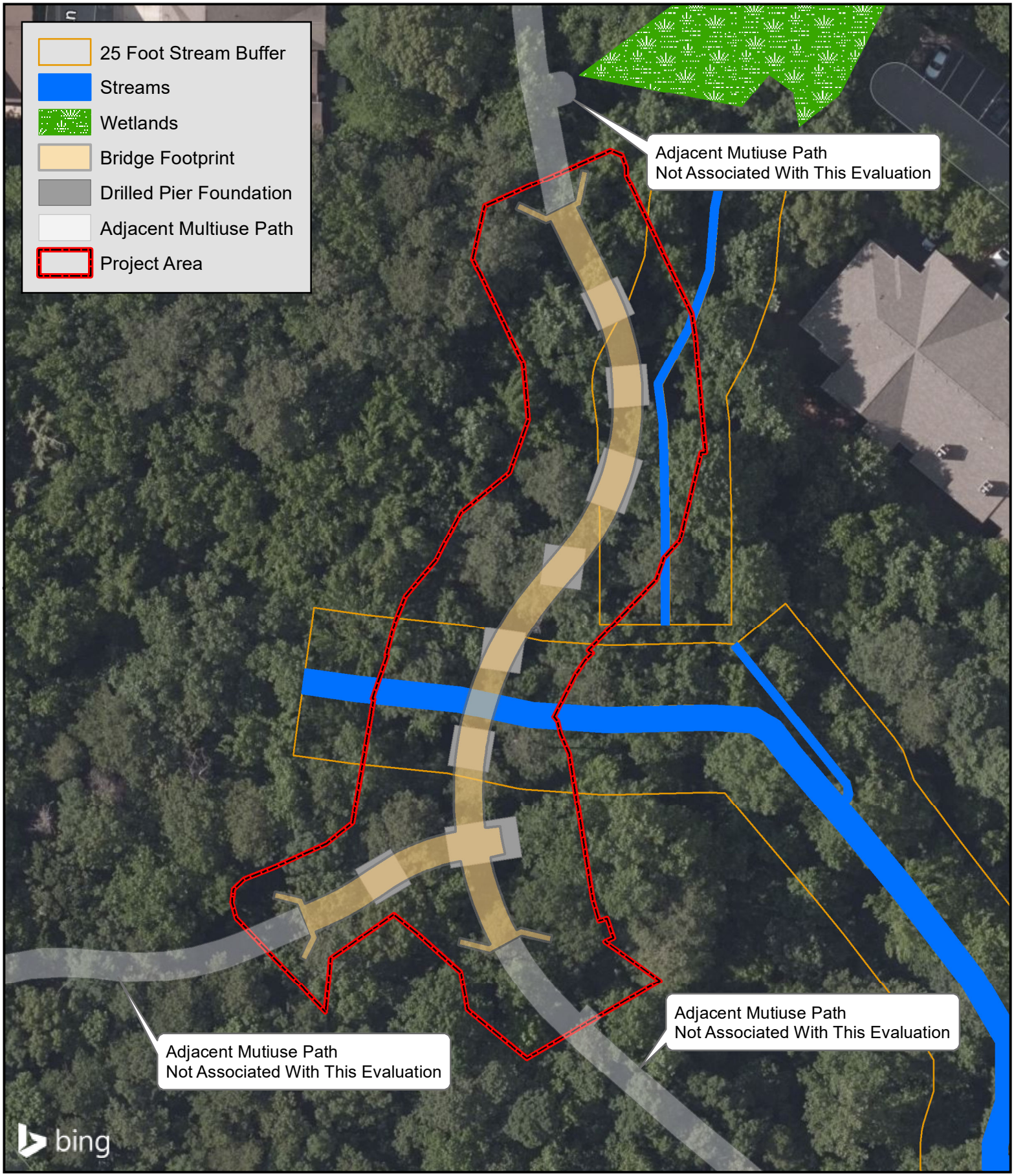

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Figure 3
Proposed Action Alternative Map

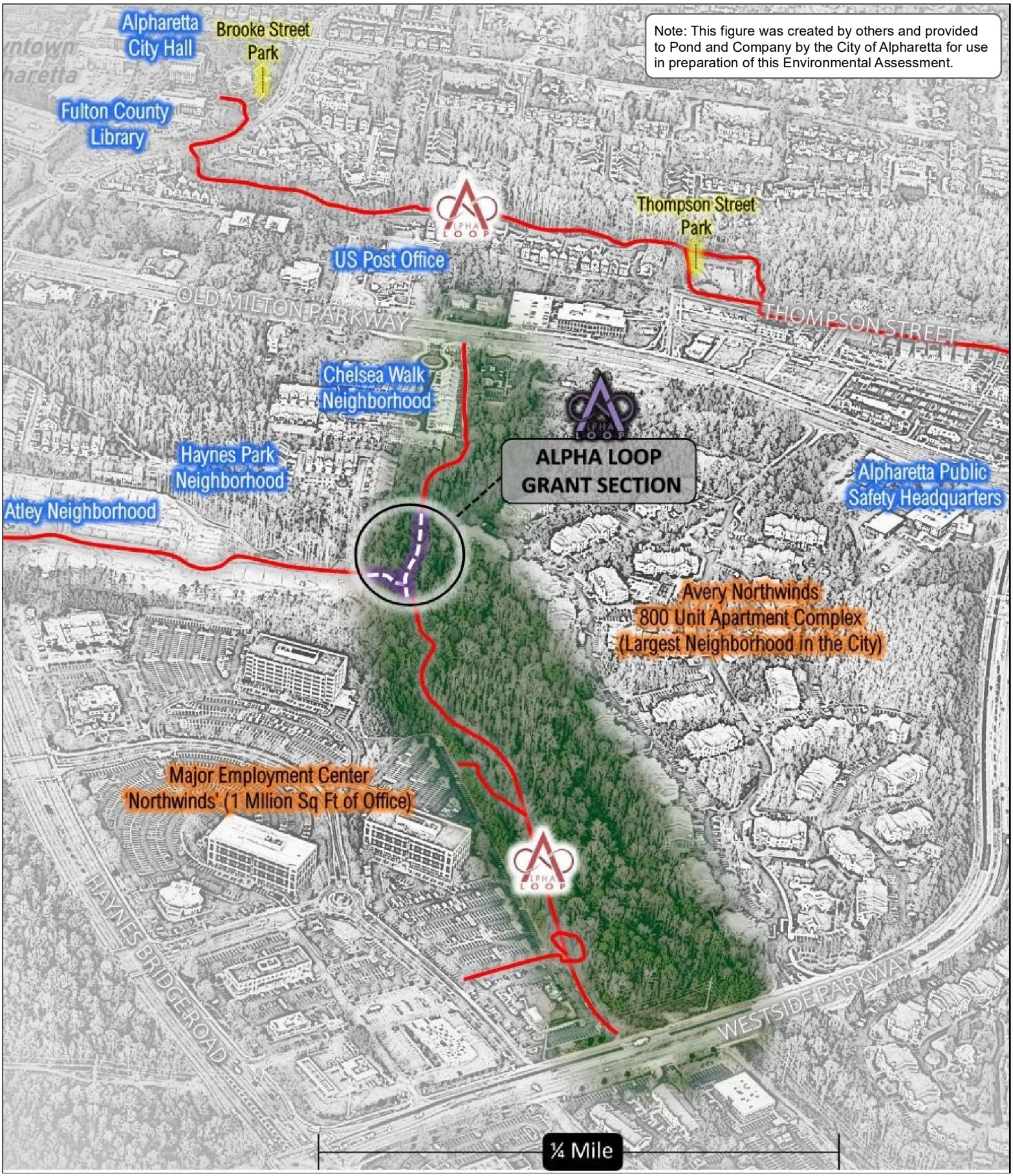
POND

THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA

0 25 50 Feet
0 5 10 Meters

AlphaLoop Multiuse Path Project Pedestrain Bridge
Fulton County, Georgia
August 2021

1 in = 50 ft



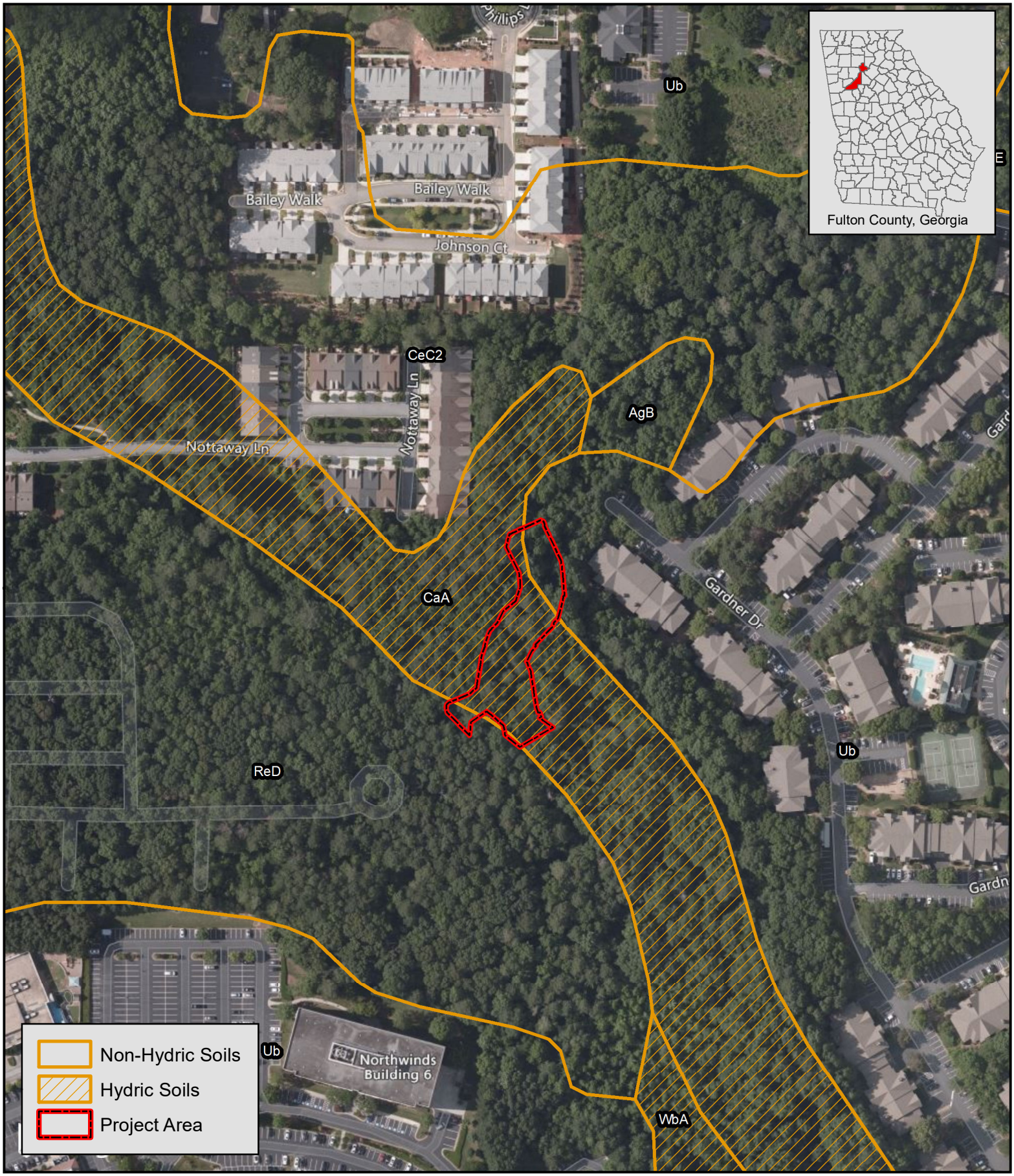
Service Layer Credits:

Figure 4
Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Location Map

AlphaLoop Multiuse Path Project Pedestrain Bridge
Fulton County, Georgia
August 2021

POND

THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA



Service Layer Credits: © 2021 Microsoft Corporation © 2021 Maxar ©CNES (2021) Distribution Airbus DS © 2021 TomTom

Figure 5
Soils Map

POND

THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA

0 100 200 Feet

0 30 60 Meters

1 in = 200 ft

AlphaLoop Multiuse Path Project Pedestrain Bridge
Fulton County, Georgia
August 2021

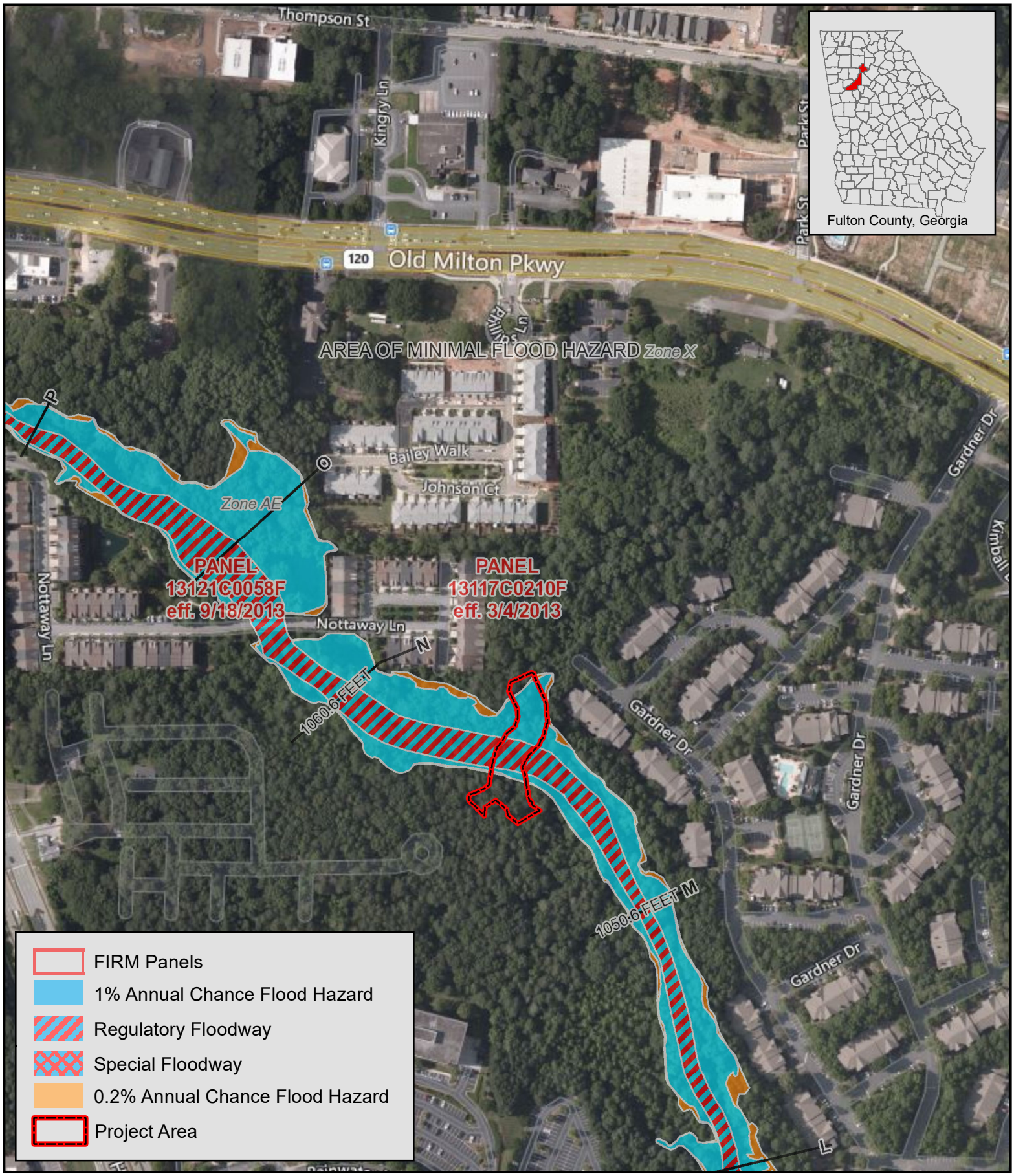


Figure 6
Flood Zone Map

POND

THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA

0 150 300 Feet
0 50 100 Meters

1 in = 300 ft

AlphaLoop Multiuse Path Project Pedestrain Bridge
Fulton County, Georgia
August 2021