PROCTOR CREEK

Priority Goals for the Project

- Region 4's multimedia efforts in the Proctor Creek watershed in Atlanta, Ga. support four of the Administrator's seven themes: Making a Visible Difference in Communities Across the Country; Protecting Water: A Precious, Limited Resource; Launching a New Era of State, Tribal and Local Partnerships; and Working Toward a Sustainable Future.

- Region 4's goals include but are not limited to,
    - Restoring Proctor Creek and its Larger Ecosystem
    - Reducing Flooding and Reconnecting Stream with Floodplain
    - Minimize or Prevent CSOs (Combined Sewer Overflows) and SSOs (Sanitary Sewer Overflows)
    - Improve Water Quality
    - Revitalize Brownfields Sites and Eliminate Exposures
    - Prevent Future Exposures to creek contamination
    - Improve Public Health and Children's Health
    - Exploring Science tools the enhance community engagement
    - Fostering Community Capacity Building, Education, and Job Opportunities
    - Increase Environmental Awareness
    - Convener / Engagement of other Federal Partners to support mutual objectives
    - Build Stronger Partnerships with local partners and the Community

Proposed technical assistance (i.e., monitoring, planning, etc)

- **Water Protection Division**
    - Urban Waters Federal Partnership: The mission of this partnership is to reconnect overburdened or economically distressed urban communities with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with community-led revitalization efforts. This will improve our Nation's water systems and promote their economic, environmental and social benefits. Five federal agencies have agreed to act as "champions" for the Partnership: the Environmental Protection Agency; the US Army COE Mobile District; the Federal Emergency Management Agency; Housing and Urban Development; and, the Department of Transportation. Each of the five agencies has involvement in the work being conducted in the watershed either directly or as a partner with a state or local organization.

- **Children's Environmental Health**
    - Federal Partner's Collaboration Initiative: Children's Environmental Health Summit, EPA has been leading a workgroup which consists of senior leaders from various federal agencies. This workgroup was originally charged to discuss three areas of mutual interest in schools, childcare, and homes with respect to federal agency collaboration. Recognizing the multiple areas of expertise and responsibility of the combined partners, the workgroup proposed a project that builds on the Green Ribbon Schools principles as a starting point, which will be designed as a reference tool for future use by school stakeholders
- **Brownfields**

- Community Grant Writing Workshop/Program Project Evaluation Workshop: This workshop will help community organizations with strategies for reporting and telling their success stories on work being conducted at the community level. It will help answer questions on how to better measure success and ways to evaluate community efforts and communicate outcomes to government partners as part of the grant/proposal writing process.

- **Environmental Justice and Sustainability**
  - The Office of Environmental Justice (EJ) and Sustainability is responsible for integrating environmental justice and sustainability into the region's programs, policies, and procedures. Also, the Office promotes the integration of EJ and sustainability into local, state, and federal government programs, policies, and procedures. In addition, the Office encourages stakeholder involvement by providing technical assistant, grant funding, workshops and training.
  - Environmental Justice, Science Tools, and Health Disparities: The Office of Environmental Justice in coordination with EPA's Office of Research and Development continues its work and commitment to the National Prevention Strategy (NPS). NPS has four strategic directions: Healthy and Safe Community Environments, Clinical and Community Preventive Services, Empowered People and Elimination of Health Disparities. Health Impact Assessments are a new science tool being explored as a way to improve policy decisions across the government and promote the National Prevention Council's commitment to "identify opportunities to consider prevention and health."

Ongoing Efforts – The Proctor Creek Watershed experiences several overlapping environmental issues. The watershed has poor water quality and a severely altered hydrology due to illicit sewer connections, combined sewer overflows, sanitary sewer overflows, and high volumes of contaminated storm water runoff are during rain events. The watershed also has 33%+ impervious cover in places making flooding a significant issue. Other significant issues include flooded housing, mold and mildew in the houses, abandoned and derelict properties, illegal tire dumping, high crime and lack of policing and lack of economic opportunity.

- **Urban Waters Small Grant to Chattahoochee Riverkeeper** - Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, Inc., (CRK) will work with a wide range of partners to engage Proctor Creek Watershed residents to achieve measureable water quality improvements within Proctor Creek and its watershed. CRK will expand its Neighborhood Water Watch Program, in which the community will take an active role in identifying and resolving major pollution problems in the Proctor Creek Watershed. CRK also will implement a water quality education and community organizing initiative where citizens will collect water samples from dozens of locations throughout the watershed and conduct assessments of the collection sites. Samples will be returned to a central lab site where a variety of water quality parameters will be measured. The data will be summarized and mapped; participants will be taught how to interpret results.

- **Urban Waters Small Grant to ECO-Action -** Environmental Community Action, Inc.'s Green Infrastructure Initiative will create a comprehensive "Vision for Action" to reduce flooding and improve water quality in Proctor Creek while revitalizing adjacent low-income neighborhoods. This initiative focuses on the higher-elevation Atlanta University Center (AUC) campuses, which are the sources of much of the contaminated runoff. The project will bring academics together with leaders of underserved communities to better understand the extent and impact of sewage and stormwater flows from the higher-elevation Atlanta University Center campuses on the downstream residential communities.

- **Urban Waters Small Grant to Center for Watershed Protection -** The Center for Watershed Protection, Inc., will provide a replicable blueprint for pollutant load reduction crediting by developing a cost-effective approach to clean urban waters that integrates community-based water monitoring. A stakeholder group will be convened to vet the approach, which is expected to provide significant and quantifiable pollutant reduction to the Proctor Creek watershed in Atlanta. The project team includes the City of Atlanta, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, and Center for Watershed Protection, Inc.
- **Emory/Georgia Tech's HERCULES Exposome Research Center Advisory Group –** EPA will continue to provide technical assistance to the Exposome research center as a vehicle to better incorporate the environmental component into the study of disease and health. In return, this will increase community capacity, develop partnerships with local community and HERCULES scientist (including research collaborations).
- **Mold/Mildew Project –** EPA will provide technical assistance and analysis materials from the Cincinnati-Office of Research and Development on its Environmental Relative Moldiness Index (ERMI) Model to this Community-led door-to-door survey funded by Emory's Hercules program.
- **Proctor Creek Stewardship Council** – EPA will continue to provide technical assistance to this community leader's organization and to ground-truth and increase EPA's knowledge and understanding of community specific issues.
- **Groundwork Atlanta –** EPA will continue to provide technical assistance to this project as the organization identifies and priorities brownfields sites and their likelihood for reuse as urban gardens, park space amenities, greenway connections, or historic preservation sites. The goal is to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships which empower people, businesses and organizations to promote environmental, economic and social well-being.
- **Brownfields Assessment Grants –** EPA will provide technical assistance to the City of Atlanta as they conduct further Brownfields assessments. The City of Atlanta will initiate "Prevention of Future Brownfields" eligible grant activity that includes development of an Environmental Sustainability Incentive Area that creates incentives for Economic Development in the Proctor Creek Watershed.
- **Upcoming Watershed Health Impact Assessment (HIA) -** The Proctor Creek Watershed HIA will gather input from the community and local researchers to inform an environmental district concept to incentivize green improvements (green infrastructure improvements, brownfields redevelopment, water quality improvements, greenspace creation, etc.) for the watershed.

<u>Previous Planning Studies</u>

- **R4's SESD Water DNA Fingerprinting Study –** In 2012-2013, EPA's Science and Ecosystem Support Division sampled 8 locations along the length of Proctor Creek for E. coli and fecal indicator bacteria. The purpose of the year-long investigation was to characterize surface water (8 monitoring locations) in Proctor Creek and its tributaries located in Atlanta, Georgia, and determine if the bacteriological contaminants in the creek could be identified by Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) analysis.

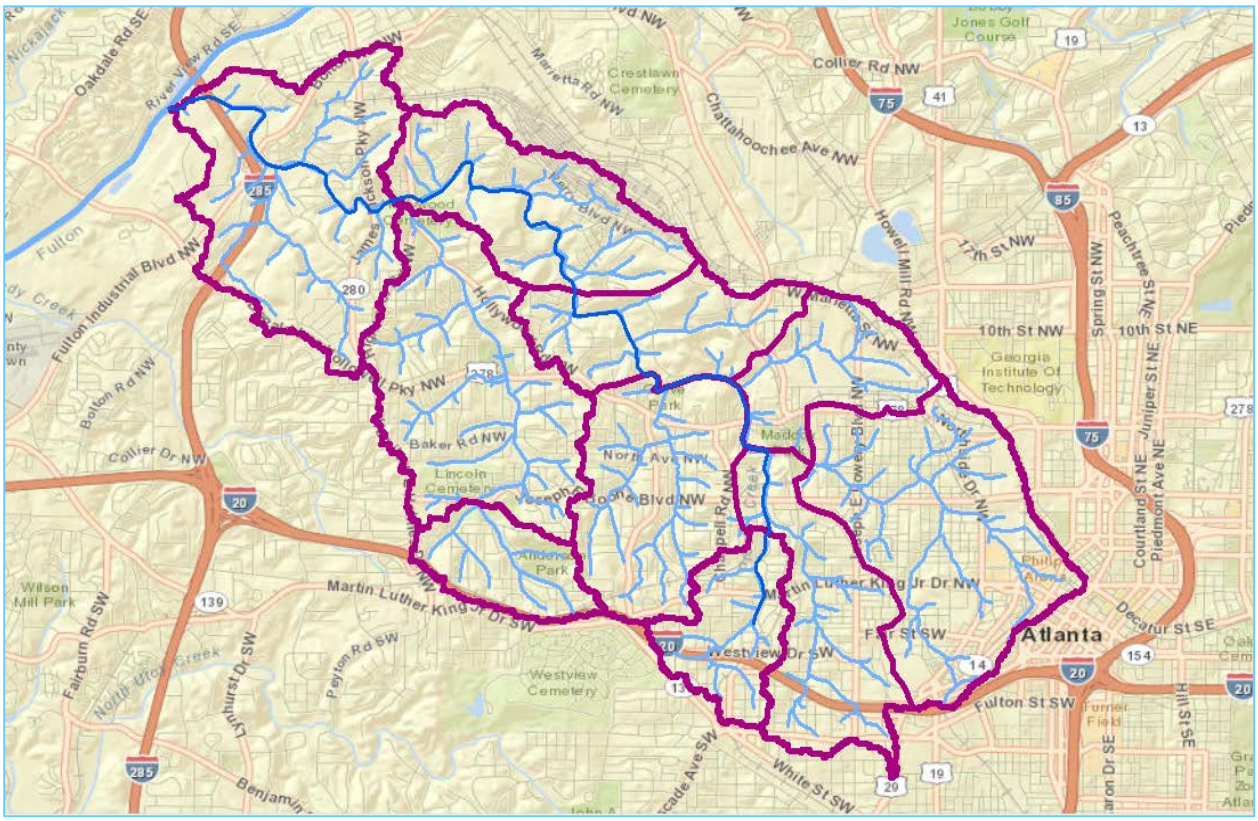
- **Green Infrastructure Health Impact Assessment (HIA) –** In 2013-2014, EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and Sustainability and Office of Research Development conducted a Health Impact Assessment study on a green street and road-diet project planned by the City of Atlanta. The HIA study assessed the distribution of both environmental and health impacts of Green Infrastructure approaches to flooding and stormwater issues in the community. Further, the study will provide health protection and

health promotion recommendations on decisions around green infrastructure approaches to Storm Water Management, Ecosystem Restoration, and Community Revitalization to the City of Atlanta.

- **Park Pride PNA Study** – The Proctor Creek's North Avenue Basin (PNA) study was conducted in 2010 by Park Pride. The vision of this study was to propose greenspace improvements that will provide capacity relief for the combined sewer system while offering a series of connected greenspaces as a community-wide amenity. The green infrastructure proposed for the PNA study area include parks, greenways, community gardens, and other vegetated areas, as well as systems such as constructed streams, rain gardens, Bioretention ponds, and recommendations regarding green development techniques that can be applied to future building in the area.

- **City of Atlanta Watershed Improvement Plan** – In 2011, The Department of Watershed Management (DWM) Office of Watershed Protection worked with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and community stakeholders to create the Proctor Creek Watershed Improvement Plan. ARC and DWM conducted several stream walking events in which both staff and community volunteers literally walked the streams looking for obvious pollution sources and collecting over 100 water samples. The plan identified non-point sources of pollution in Proctor Creek and recommended solutions. DWM initiated some of the following programs and activities as a result of these recommendations.

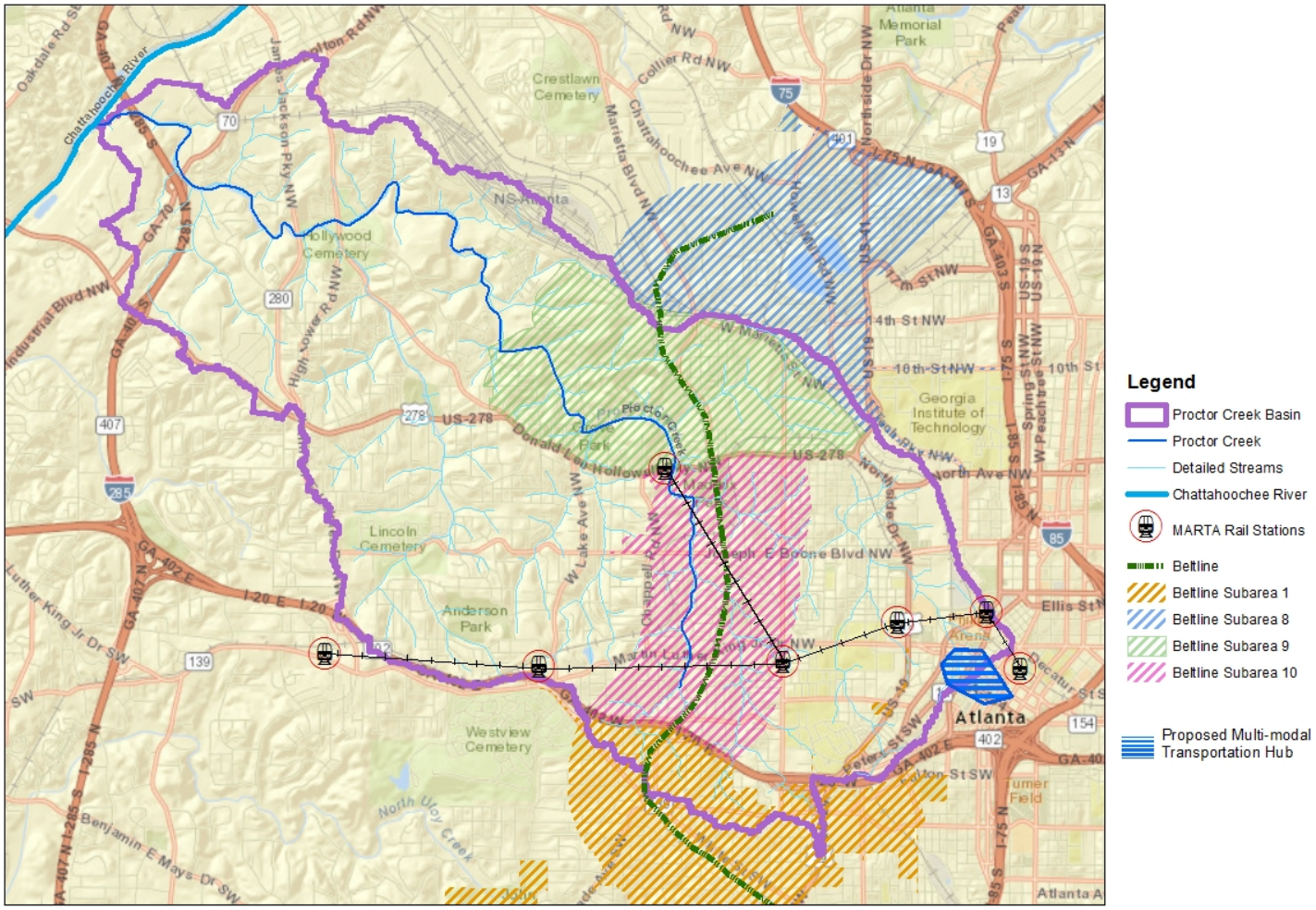
<u>Maps of the area</u> – The watershed covers about 28 square miles in SW Atlanta and its location is completely within the limits of the City of Atlanta and Fulton County. The Creek and its tributaries flow in a northwest direction to the Chattahoochee River.



<u>Transportation Nexus</u>:

- **The Atlanta Beltline Inc.** - It is a system of rails, trails, and greenspace that will seamlessly connect 45 neighborhoods, while also providing first and last mile transit connectivity for the entire metro Atlanta region. The Atlanta Beltline has brought a lot of interest and action to revitalizing stressed areas of Atlanta through transportation and green development projects.
    - The Atlanta BeltLine is the most comprehensive revitalization effort ever undertaken in the City of Atlanta and among the largest, most wide-ranging urban redevelopment and mobility projects currently underway in the United States. This sustainable project is providing a network of public parks, multi-use trails and transit by re-using 22-miles of historic railroad corridors circling downtown and connecting 45 neighborhoods directly to each other.
    - There are 2 sections (Subarea 9, Subarea 10) that cross-section the Proctor Creek watershed. (see map)

Proctor Creek Watershed, Beltline Sections and MARTA Light Rail



- **MMPT – The proposed Multi-modal Passenger Terminal**
    - The proposed Georgia MultiModal Passenger Terminal (MMPT) will bring together various bus and rail transit services in a centralized downtown Atlanta ("the Gulch"). The Georgia MMPT is envisioned as the hub for existing and proposed transportation networks across the state including Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) rail and buses; Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) Xpress buses; Gwinnett County Transit (GCT); Cobb

Community Transit (CCT); Mega bus; Greyhound intercity bus; and planned intercity and commuter rail service. A master plan is being developed for as a catalyst for development in the area – 119 acres area Georgia Dome, CNN Center and the Five Points MARTA station – while creating jobs and connecting neighborhoods.

- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed Georgia Multimodal Passenger Terminal (MMPT) in a 120-acre area in downtown Atlanta, known as the Gulch. EPA is actively involved in the EIS process. The MMPT is proposed to bring together various ground and rail transit services in a centralized downtown location to create a vital connection link for the people of metro-Atlanta and beyond. The MMPT will be the hub for existing and proposed transportation networks, including the existing MARTA rail and bus systems, the regional express bus systems, and the Georgia railroad network.