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**Athens Land Trust and the City of Madison
Partner to Preserve Urban Greenspace
and Launch Innovative TDR Bank**

MADISON, GA—July 13, 2015—This past Tuesday, Athens Land Trust closed on four conservation easements in the Historic District of Madison, Georgia. These parcels are now permanently protected from development and also contributed the first credits to Madison’s recently created TDR (Transferrable Development Rights) Bank.

Athens Land Trust’s Executive Director, Heather Benham, says, "We are excited to be a part of this incredible pilot project. We especially want to thank the Riverview Foundation for their recognition of the importance of this project and their support that made it possible. We hope that other communities around the state look to Madison’s success as a model for what can be done to encourage development in a more sustainable manner."

Three of the four conservation easements were donated by the City of Madison. Round Bowl Spring is a park of 1.35 acres that is adjacent to the city’s original water source and Downtown Madison, and contains walking trails, native plants, spring runs, and a stream. Presidents Park comprises 2.52 acres of bottomland hardwood forest containing a tributary of Horse Branch and is the future site of vital greenspace and recreation for an underserved neighborhood. Pritchard Farm is 19.00 acres of Oak-Hickory-Pine forest and successional meadow, a portion of which will be the future site of the City’s rural cemetery expansion. The fourth conservation easement was donated by the Downtown Development Authority of Madison, the City’s urban renewal agency. Located in the Downtown Urban Redevelopment Area, Tanyard Branch includes 2.85 acres of bottomland hardwood forests and its namesake water source. All four of these parcels will be open to the public and include walking trails, the first components in a planned 40-mile trail system connecting downtown, neighborhoods, parks, and places of assembly.

The City of Madison’s TDR Bank and its ordinance are a pilot program. "This is progressive planning, and frankly, was at first a little intimidating," commented Planning & Development Director Monica Callahan. "With expertise from Athens Land Trust and support from the Riverview Foundation, Madison is thrilled to have crafted a TDR program to concentrate on protecting and connecting vital pockets of natural habitat, riparian areas, and greenspace within an existing built environment."

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