

Work Session of the City of Sandy Springs City Council
Studio Theatre, Sandy Springs City Hall and Broadcast Via Live Webinar and Teleconference,
Tuesday, April 20, 2021
Page 1 of 3

Work Session of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

I. Invocation – Dr. Aaron Menikoff - Mount Vernon Baptist Church

II. Public Works

A. 2021-121 TSPLOST II Work Session

Allen Johnson, P.E., TSPLOST Program Manager reviewed the T-SPLOST II presentation. TSPLOST I was approved by voters in November 2017. Collections began April, 2018 and will end March, 2022. We are finishing those projects, and are now working toward TSPLOST II to be on the ballot as a referendum on November 2, 2021. TSPLOST II collections will run from April, 2022 to March, 2027, and the City of Sandy Springs is projected to collection up to \$96,585,865. Opportunities for public input for the City of Sandy Springs projects include: Virtual Public Information Open House - April 26, 2021; Farmers Market Booth – May 1 and May 8, 2021; online Public Input – April 26 to May 7, 2021; and MCC Vote – June 1, 2021. The proposed TSPLOST II projects list came from the Transportation Master Plan approved at the April 6 Mayor / City Council Meeting.

TSPLOST II Projects

Project Name/Title	TSPLOST Budget
TIER ONE	
Bridge Program	\$6,160,000
Intelligent Transportation System Program	\$2,365,000
Sidewalk Program	\$12,100,000
Johnson Ferry Rd at Peachtree Dunwoody Improvements	\$3,300,000
Hammond Drive Widening	\$38,500,000
Roswell Road North Boulevard Project	\$9,680,000
SR 400 Multi-Use Trail	\$4,400,000
Glenridge Dr., Hammond to south of Wellington Trace	\$2,750,000
Boylston Drive Sidepath & Realignment	\$2,980,000
	\$82,235,000
TIER TWO	
Roberts Drive Sidepath, Roswell Rd to Dunwoody Pl	\$10,950,000
Johnson Ferry Rd. Sidepath, Glenridge Dr. to Peachtree Dunwoody Rd	\$3,025,000
Lake Forrest Sidewalk	\$500,000
	\$14,475,000
TIER THREE	
Roadway Maintenance and Paving	\$14,475,000
TOTAL ALL TIERS	\$111,185,000

The TSPLOST II project list has to be identified, public comment received, and voted by Council to be presented to Fulton County by June 15, 2021. The Hammond Road Widening project will also include federal funds. The difference between a 'side path' and a 'trail' is a side path is a transportation system adjacent to a roadway. It provides a transportation alternative. A trail can be recreational and Fulton County specifically determined that recreational trails cannot be part of TSPLOST, but a transportation alternative can. The SR 400 Multiuse Path will provide that someone who works at the hospitals in Sandy Springs, who may also live in north Buckhead or south Sandy Springs, will be able to ride their bike to work.

Council Member Chris Burnett noted that roughly 50% of the total TSPLOST funding involves improvements between Hammond Drive and Boylston / Hammond. Were the budget estimates determined using schematics and drawings? He asked if Mr. Johnson is fairly confident that what has been designed can be funded in that \$41M.

TSPLOST Program Manager Johnson replied that was \$55M. The challenge is there is a lot of commercial ROW between Roswell and Boylston and there may be 'strip' takes from Glenridge to Barfield. We are going to tie into the existing four-lane road, but to get all the turn lanes and the traffic studies that have been done, there will be significant work on the sides. We are trying to avoid that and focus on the area that is currently two lanes. The consultant was tasked with completing a value engineering to make sure it fits within the range presented.

Work Session of the City of Sandy Springs City Council
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Page 2 of 3

Council Member Andy Bauman stated the Hammond Drive Widening project includes not just roadway improvements, but side paths with a park-like setting of landscape, trees, etc. Will there be some components that we will need to fund out of the General Fund? Is there was a limit to what the TSPLOST funds could be used for? He clarified that aesthetics could be a part, too? Hammond Drive Widening is 13% of the Tier One project list and it is very much an aesthetic project. The Lake Forrest Sidewalk project is underfunded. It does not get you to Mt. Paran, which is what is needed. The whole west side needs to come down from Mt. Paran to the dam to complete one of the great networks we have in the city. Mt. Paran, down to Lake Forrest, down to Wieuca, back to Powers Ferry, bringing together hundreds and hundreds of people and families from homes and apartments. The Lake Forrest Sidewalk project should be elevated to Tier One. He's going to have an issue with the Roswell Road North Boulevard project.

TSPLOST Program Manager Johnson replied you would not be able to build a park with TSPLOST. Hammond has side paths, which are transportation alternatives. Lighting is part of the project, as well as roundabouts and a bridge structure.

Council Member John Paulson stated the Roswell Road North Boulevard project is part of the galvanization of the North. This project can stay where it is because the cities of Roswell and Sandy Springs are building a pedestrian bridge right across the Chattahoochee River to encourage bikes and walking transportation. The boulevard will allow that path to have nice continuity all the way up to Dunwoody Place. There are sidewalks south on Dunwoody Place, and this transforms the character of this stretch into more of a boulevard look. After eight years of trying to improve things on the North End, this is one of those signature projects that shows we are doing something.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio asked will the SR 400 Multi-Use Trail connect with the City of Atlanta Multi-Use Trail on SR 400 at Loridans.

TSPLOST Program Manager Johnson replied that we have led the design from Loridans to Johnson Ferry because of Federal requirements. We are designing the project and will be reimbursed by the City of Atlanta for the design and environmental clearance from Loridans to Johnson Ferry, but we are only constructing and buying ROW from the city limits. The city limit is in the middle of nowhere and the Federal government said you have to end it somewhere else. The City of Atlanta has construction funding all ready for Loridans to the city limits and they have construction from Wieuca to Loridans. When completed you will be able to go from Miami Circle up to Johnson Ferry, and eventually to the Beltline. It will tie up with the Glenridge Connector, go underneath I-285, and connect to the I-285 / SR 400 Multi-Use Path being built there, which connects to Peachtree Dunwoody. Eventually, one will go straight up and one goes over to Peachtree Dunwoody. Then with TSPLOST / PCID, we will build the side path from Hammond up to Mt. Vernon. PCID is working on a section from Peachtree Dunwoody to I-285. The challenge we have with the federal funding is that we put in for all of it and ARC is only giving pieced meal amounts. They have given us about \$700M; we can do about \$8.5M; then next year, we are asking for more federal funds. In fiscal year 2023, we can build a segment. Earlier this month we received ROW authorization, so we can actually begin purchasing ROW, which will take nine months to a year. This will dovetail with beginning construction the end of 2022. That is when the City of Atlanta is planning on building theirs, too. Each fiscal year we will ask for more funds until it is completely constructed. The total cost in the City of Sandy Springs is \$20M; it is \$24M from Loridans. Each project will be explained at the public information open houses. Staff will be in attendance to answer questions.

III. City Council Discussion Items

Mayor Rusty Paul stated for years, the US Constitution empowered Congress to control spending at the federal level. Several years ago, after a lot of conversation in various forms, Congress voted to end the process of earmarking appropriations bills with local projects. Congress gave their responsibility designating projects at the local level to the US Department of Transportation and other federal agencies. Our current Congress has decided to get back into the earmarking business. We have had conversations with the two Senate offices, as well as Representative Lucy McBath. There are three opportunities for congressional transportation funding as earmarks. With only four hours to prepare, we responded to the request by Senator Warnock and Representative McBath's offices for one of those earmarking projects. We responded with a request for priorities providing information on the Hammond Drive Widening project, which is estimated at \$55M. If that is funded, every amount we get would be less that Sandy Springs' citizens by themselves would have to fund. Representative McBath's office an earmarking fund has a

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Tuesday, April 20, 2021
Page 3 of 3

93 funding cap of \$1M. We submitted three eligible projects: the GA 400 Bridge Enhancements, the I-285 / Mt. Vernon
94 Highway Bridge Enhancement and the GA 400 PATH. The final one is a Community Funding Infrastructure request,
95 where as the others were Community Funding project requests. Projects in the ARC's Transportation and
96 Improvement Plan get top priority and each member of Congress will have up to \$15-\$20M for these projects. We
97 will find out in the next appropriation cycle. Most of the appropriation bills are passed in the fall. The infrastructure
98 bill will probably be passed sometime later this year. If TPLOST projects get funded through these earmarks then we
99 will be able to reallocate those funds in TSPLOST for some of the other projects presented tonight that may be
100 underfunded. Staff has worked real hard to try to get us into that particular queue.

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103 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at **6:33 p.m.**

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105 Approved: May 4, 2021.

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111 Russell K. Paul, Mayor

Raquel D. González, City Clerk