

Work Session of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on November 1, 2022 at 6:00 PM, Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

I. Invocation

Rev. Dr. Bill Murray, Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church

II. Staff Discussion Items

A. 2022-296 Transform 285/400 Update

Marlo Clowers, Alternative Delivery Program Manager, Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), presented the Transform 285 / 400 project updates.

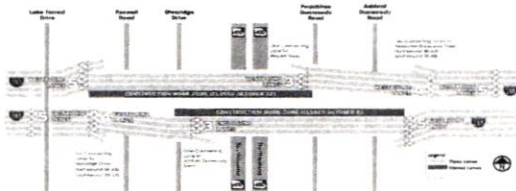
Project Accomplishments

- **I-285 WB to Peachtree Dunwoody Road/ SR 400 NB & SB.** Opened in August, 2022. Motorists driving on I-285 WB to SR 400 NB and SB have a new exiting pattern (same exit as Peachtree Dunwoody Road). Motorists must make their decision to exit earlier just past Ashford Dunwoody Road. This new exit point will eliminate conflict points.
- **I-285 EB to Glenridge Drive/SR 400 NB & SB.** Opened in September, 2022. This new exit point places drivers into connecting lanes and allows access to Glenridge Drive, SR 400 NB and SR 400 SB (Exit 26-27). Motorists traveling EB on I-285 must make their decision to exit sooner just before the Roswell Road overpass.

I-285 Lane Closures

- **I-285 Lane Closures: Phase 1.** Bridge demolition is expected to be complete in mid-November. After bridge demo is complete the major foundation work will begin.

I-285 Lane Closures: Phase 1



- **I-285 Lane Closures: Phase 2.** Will begin Q1 of 2023. Traffic will shift to the inside lanes and the existing outside lanes will close to traffic. Crews will demolish and reconstruct the exterior portions of the I-285 bridges over Glenridge Drive, SR 400, and Peachtree Dunwoody Road. Three lanes in each direction will remain open during the daytime hours, with the potential for additional overnight lane closures to further reduce available travel lanes.

GDOT conducted an extensive campaign to ensure the public was aware of the upcoming lane closures,

which included messaging, coordination with key stakeholders, and resources to available for the public to stay informed of the status of closures and project milestones. GDOT has also made use of the dynamic message signs, which are placed throughout the project network as well as outside the project limits. Although things are operating better than anticipated, GDOT will continue to use these communication tools to keep users informed.

Project Milestones and Schedule

SR400

- **Traffic Lane Shifts.** SR 400 SB connecting lanes to mainlines – TBD
- **Mount Vernon Highway.** Moving EB traffic to the south side of the new bridge to allow construction of the raised median – Nov. 11
- **North Springs MARTA Station.** SR 400 SB to North Springs MARTA Station – Nov. 11
- **Noise Barriers.** Construction along both SR 400 NB and SB. All noise barriers are slated to be completed by Q1 2023
- **Paving.** Temporary ramp and connecting lanes
- **Bridge Construction.** SR 400 NB will have lane closures (nightly & weekends) due to bridge demo and reconstruction as a part of the I-285 lane closure work.

Abernathy Road at SR 400

- **Abernathy Road.** Construction activities to finish up before opening to motorists
- Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) configuration anticipated implementation – Q1 2023
- **Bridge construction.** Abernathy Road - ongoing

Glenridge Drive and Peachtree Dunwoody Road

- Lanes on Peachtree Dunwoody Road will remain as they currently are.
- Full closures will be ongoing but limited to only one road at a time (nights and weekends only).
- The left turn lane from Glenridge Drive NB accessing the I-285 WB on ramp is closed during bridge reconstruction.

I-285 Upcoming Construction Activities

- **Noise Barriers.** Construction along I-285 EB and WB. All noise barriers are slated to be completed by Q1 2023.
- **Ramp Traffic Shifts.** Off-ramp and on-ramp lane configurations to be completed throughout the year.
- **Bridge Construction.** 285 WB over Lake Forrest Drive deck replacement – December 2022 – March 2023. Bridge demolition and reconstruction over Glenridge Drive, SR 400, and Peachtree Dunwoody Road (I-285 Lane Closures)

PATH Construction on Peachtree Dunwoody Road

- Pedestrians and cyclists can expect continued progress along the shared-use path being constructed along SR 400 NB spanning from Johnson Ferry Road to Peachtree Dunwoody Road

- Less than 1 mile and 16 feet wide

Project Milestones

- Opening elements of the project as they complete, realizing safety and mobility benefits in real time.
- Major openings of ramps, bridges, and connecting lanes will continue to open throughout 2022 and into 2023.
- The majority of work on I-285 mainline and on SR 400 is anticipated to be complete by the middle of 2023.

There are various ways to stay informed of project updates, including GDOT website and social media.

Mayor Rusty Paul commended GDOT for communicating well with the City throughout the project. There are safety concerns. There is a concern about the mingling of big commercial rigs coming into a narrow area with commuter traffic. Given the nature of the incidents and the number of accidents, several major truck wrecks have occurred in the corridor. How can truck traffic be reduced in this corridor? Is there the possibility of diverting the truck traffic?

Program Manager Clowers replied there have been conversations about diverging the truck traffic. The lane reductions are necessary for replacing the bridges, but it will take legislative action to divert trucks inside 285. GDOT recognizes there have been incidents involving trucks since the lane reductions have been in place, though it is not 100% clear if those accidents are due to the lane reductions, driver behavior or just getting used to the reductions.

Mayor Paul stated there are extended periods of inactivity on Mt. Vernon Bridge and where is it perceived by the community that not much work is being done.

Program Manager Clowers replied Mt. Vernon was one of the first scopes of work started by the design builders. There have been utility issues, and design issues. It is a design-build project and the developers determined Mt. Vernon Bridge is not a critical item as it is not a collector-distributor lane. The developer sequenced the work so they could focus on the more critical items, so Mt. Vernon has taken longer than anticipated.

Councilmember Andy Bauman stated the perception is there have been a lot of accidents and they are more severe since the reduced lanes. Does the data, in terms of life safety and accidents, support that? How transparent can GDOT be with this data? If it is necessary, the City Council may be able to enact a resolution supporting the diversion of traffic.

Program Manager Clowers stated GDOT is doing a daily report on conditions throughout the corridor. GDOT can share that information. GDOT meets monthly with City of Sandy Springs Public Works. A resolution or something in support of diverting traffic could be used by GDOT as support of that request, should the data support it.

Councilmember Andy Bauman asked are there other steps that can be taken with messaging, caution lights, speed limits, etc. 285 can be a scary prospect for less experienced and cautious drivers.

Program Manager Clowers stated GDOT has reached out to trucking organizations to help ask trucks to encourage alternate routes.

Councilmember Jody Reichel stated with the signage, often drivers are right at one of the exits before they realize they have to get off. Some of the exits are also very dark at night. Are there lights that can be placed temporarily?

Councilmember Melissa Mular stated there are certain areas where there are no sound barriers. Specifically by Lake Forrest and Allen Road and the new townhome communities. Also, on SR 400 from Thomas Eye Group and the IBM Building. Can noise barriers be added?

Program Manager Clowers stated projects require environmental clearance that is unique to the project. This has to be done long before dirt is turned. For transform 285/400, environmental clearance has concluded. During the process, there was a review permitted, future developments. The referenced areas near Allen Road were not permitted at the time. There is the potential for some future projects, possibly the Express Lanes project, that would begin the environmental clearance process all over again.

Councilmember John Paulson stated the completed lanes are fantastic. But, GDOT has a responsibility to address these noise problems that are here today. There should be some mechanism for GDOT to review this.

Program Manager Clowers replied there is a mechanism under new project, within the same footprint.

Councilmember Paulson requested that GDOT open a new project when this is complete to address the noise.

B. 2022-297 Staff Updates on Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations

Kristin Smith, Assistant City Manager, presented the staff update on the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations. The Diversity and Inclusion Task Force was formed in February 2021. Three subcommittees were formed, focused on Recreation, Communications, and Housing. Reports were finalized in June 2022.

Housing Subcommittee

- Utilize CDBG funds to support workforce housing initiatives when Section 108 loan repayment is complete
- Revisit Economic Development Incentive Policy for Affordable Housing and increase the scope of incentives
- Invest in expertise on and transparency of housing and best practices for redevelopment:
 - Housing Policy Study
 - Create a Director of Housing position
- Preserve and protect remaining naturally occurring affordable housing units

In tandem with the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force recommendations, staff also received feedback from the community as the City was updating its Comprehensive Plan. The Work Plan items that came out of that initiative, and directly relate to the Housing Subcommittee recommendations are:

- 2022-2023: Evaluate options to enhance living conditions for existing multifamily housing
- 2022-2026: Work with regional partners to consider regional housing policy solutions to

- encourage opportunities for workforce and affordable housing
- 2023-2024: Consider a housing policy study to evaluate local options to encourage opportunities for workforce and affordable housing
- 2023: Evaluate existing Economic Development Incentive Programs

Recreation Subcommittee

The subcommittee's goal was to promote inclusion in our community's Park and Recreation facilities. The subcommittee recommended that the City create a stronger communications strategy to promote the facilities and services of Recreation and Parks. The City of Sandy Springs maintains many partnerships which are critical to the City's ability to reach into the community. Through its partnerships, the City is able to provide services to a wider array of residents.

Partnerships

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| • Art Sandy Springs | • Leadership Sandy Springs |
| • Atlanta Sport and Social | • Los Niños Primero |
| • Catalyst Sports | • National Park Service |
| • Challenge Island | • North Fulton Master Gardeners |
| • Friends of Big Trees Nature Preserve | • North Fulton Optimist Club |
| • Friends of Lost Corner Preserve | • Northside Youth Organization |
| • Fulton County Schools | • Paint like Bob Ross |
| • Georgia Audubon | • Phoenix Gymnastics |
| • Groslimond Tennis | • Sandy Springs Conservancy |
| • Healthy Kids USA | • Sandy Springs Middle School PTO |
| • High Country Outfitters | • Sandy Springs Youth Sports |
| • Horizons Atlanta | |

The City shares its recreation advertising with its partners and through various mediums. Next year, the communications will also be translated to Spanish.

Communications Subcommittee

The subcommittee's goal was to remove barriers preventing members of any race, ethnicity, or marginalized community from connecting with Sandy Springs civic life and City government. Six key recommendations include:

1. Enhance mechanisms to transmit key information to residents:
 - Advertise at MARTA locations
 - Setup kiosks/digital communication hubs
 - Publicize the Sandy Springs Works app
2. Make agendas and results of key meeting more accessible:
 - Multilingual closed captioning
 - "Plain English" and Spanish translation of key documents
3. Identify other language that have significant representation
4. Work with local news outlets to identify most effective ways to distribute newspapers to residents and make electronic media more accessible
5. Ensure that members of minority communities are aware of employment opportunities with the City
6. Work with partners to assist in the distribution of key information

English is the language spoken in the majority of Sandy Springs homes, and Spanish is next language spoken. There are other languages spoken as well. Spanish is the first language to focus on by the City,

and others will follow.

The City is proud to have a diverse group of staff working on behalf of the City and the community served.

City Employee Demographics

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Employees	Percentage Representation	Sandy Springs Demographics*
Hispanic or Latino	45	8.17%	12.2%
Asian alone	13	2.34%	7.2%
Black or African American alone	155	27.93%	19.6%
Two or more races (Not Hispanic or Latino)	12	2.16%	4.0%
White alone (Not Hispanic or Latino)	329	59.28%	58.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1	0.18%	1.4%

*2020 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Outreach for some of the City's planning efforts include digital and print advertisements (newspapers, digital kiosks, social media and roadway signage); bi-lingual mailers shared with businesses and community apartment complexes; and in-person and virtual engagement opportunities facilitated in English and Spanish.

Ongoing initiatives include:

- Document and advertisement translation for key initiatives
- Robust outreach for major planning efforts
- Partnerships with local non-profits and schools

The City will partner with the Community Assistance Center to advertise available positions. In January, 2023, the City will have a job fair with the Community Assistance Center at City Springs.

Future initiatives include:

- Multi-lingual translation for official meetings, 2022
- Expanding digital kiosks to additional parks, 2023+
- Evaluation opportunities for expanded Spanish translation for key documents, FY2024

The City is working on a campaign to encourage sign-up for its various communications tools.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated housing is a regional issue. The Atlanta Regional Commissions Local Leadership Housing Advisory Council just completed its work. The various regional jurisdictions have been discussing how to create affordable housing. Housing is at the top of consciousness in policy development.

Councilmember John Paulson asked can the City invite the Sandy Springs Perimeter to participate in the job fair cohosted by the

Assistant City Manager Smith replied the City is also partnering with Goodwill of North Georgia. The Chamber has been invited and local businesses.

Councilmember Melody Kelley asked what barriers exist in actualizing the CDBG recommendations.

Assistant City Manager Smith stated most of the City's CDBG allocation goes to the Section 108 loan. As that is closed, the City will have to build programs and build them into the action plan, which is vetted through the community. It is a longer process to be sure everything is in place for when it is time to do something different the City is ready. The loan will be paid-off through 2030. The money has been spent on the Roswell Road sidewalk project, south of 285.

Councilmember Kelley asked what is the status of the multi-lingual closed captioning .

Raquel Gonzalez, City Clerk, advised the City is not running any closed captioning at the moment. The multi-lingual closed captioning is part of a larger packet of enhancements to the City's live-streamed public meetings. There are some equipment issues the City is experiencing, but it is anticipated that multi-lingual closed captioning will be available by the end of the year.

Councilmember Kelley asked how many children does the City serve through partnership.

Assistant City Manager Smith advised Staff can pull those number and share with Council at a later time.

III. City Council Discussion Items

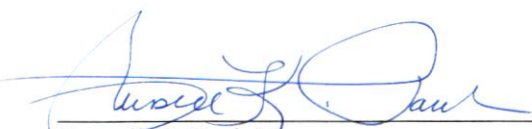
Councilmember Andy Bauman asked what is the status of the City's Ordinances related to hunting. It is common that someone bow hunts on private property, and the wounded animal wanders onto someone else's property who has to deal with the actual and traumatic damage from that.

Dan Lee, City Attorney, advised hunting, in general, is pre-empted by the State. The City is prohibited from limiting hunting. There is not a prohibition on discharging a bow and arrow in Sandy Springs. Property owners can prohibit hunting on their properties. The City can do the same, and does do the same, on public property. There is no ability for the City to limit the traveling of a wounded animal. People cannot enter onto another person's property without permission. But many times, the humanity of tracking an animal down and putting it out of its misery is paramount to getting on someone else's property.

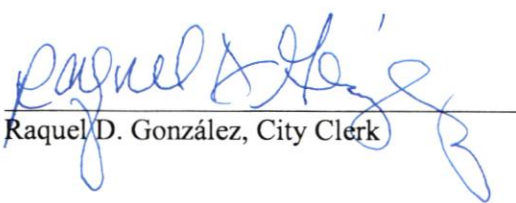
Councilmember Bauman stated the humanity to the animal is the property owner's call. There are things one can do on their own property that may result in damage to someone else's property. The City should explore opportunities to recognize the protected neighborhood and private property rights of individuals. Maybe someone should have to pay a fine.

There being no more business, the meeting ended at 7:12 p.m.

Approved: November 15, 2022



Russell K. Paul, Mayor



Raquel D. Gonzalez, City Clerk