

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 7:42 p.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

Councilmembers present: Council Member John Paulson, Council Member Ken Dishman, Council Member Chris Burnett, Council Member Gabriel Sterling, Council Member Tibby DeJulio, and Council Member Andy Bauman.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Works

1. **17-117** Mt. Paran Road at Powers Ferry Road Intersection Preferred Alternative

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager France Campbell gave the Mt. Paran Road/Powers Ferry Road Intersection Improvement PowerPoint presentation.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated there was not an option given for no build at the public information meeting.

Council Member Andy Bauman stated he was at the public information meeting. He agrees that there needs to be a no build option. The feedback he has received is that no build is the first choice. If the residents had to choose between a roundabout and a traffic light, they prefer the roundabout.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated when he realized there was not a no build option, he personally asked the residents voting to write no build on the back of their vote, if that was their preference.

Council Member Bauman stated if people had to choose between a roundabout and a traffic light, he thinks they would choose a roundabout. Of those that attended the meeting, the no build option is what most would like to see.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated with all of the outreach there were 40 respondents.

Council Member Chris Burnett asked if there is any data on other four way intersections with stop signs. He asked how this intersection at 15,000 cars per day compares with other similar intersections in the City.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated he does not currently have that data, but he can obtain it. At this intersection the volumes are relatively balanced. He does not know how an intersection can operate that well with that many vehicles. Staff can pull the data and compare it to other intersections.

Council Member Bauman asked if when he says balanced he is referring to the east/west and north/south.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell responded yes. Looking at the volume data of the north/south versus the east/west direction, the totals are about 9,000 and 7,000 cars. The p.m. peak is more of a westbound/eastbound issue. The traffic is relatively balanced.

Mayor Rusty Paul asked how the intersection is currently classified.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated he will now address that. He continued with slide 9 of the presentation.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling stated if something is not done here, the problem will be pushed back into the neighborhood.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell responded yes. There is an area of congestion in the Heard's Ferry and Riverside Drive area due to people trying to avoid the intersection. The roundabout cost would be around \$2 million including engineering, construction, and right-of-way. The traffic signal cost would be a little less than \$2 million. This area is a minor arterial in a major collector. These are two of the highest functioning classifications in the City. This intersection has been on the intersection improvement projects list for three years. The roundabout was the preferred option for those that did choose one of the alternatives. The roundabout requires less right-of-way.

Mayor Paul stated he understands that this is a TSPLOST project that was on the ballot.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated this item was under the intersection efficiency improvement programs. They voted on \$18 million for the program. He does not believe the projects were defined on the ballot. The intersection efficiency was on the ballot and the City determines the specific projects.

Council Member Bauman stated he does not believe the City is bound to move forward with a project at this location.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated that is correct.

Council Member Sterling asked if the roundabout option requires less right-of-way, why is it more expensive. He asked where the extra cost comes from.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated the cost would come from the paving and grading and more engineering for the roundabout.

Council Member Bauman stated this is a \$2 million project that has a long history. This project has been on the books for about three years. What had been on the books was a \$300,000 traffic light project with no turn lanes. Very early on in his term, about two to three years ago, he met with several of the neighbors. They voiced concerns about the neighborhood feel and the potential attraction of more traffic. This was not a good solution, so staff decided to look at other options. There was a good turnout of residents in this evening because of the public process. Before the public information open house meeting, he had a meeting with neighbors. He believes there were City meetings with the directly impacted property owners. Prior to this meeting, he sent out an email regarding this agenda item. The public comment is a critically important component of the process. We do want the input. Council Members have an obligation to wear two hats. One is representing the people that elected us. That is why he told people he is open minded, because of the impact on the adjacent property owners. On the other hand, as a Council Member, we are obligated to do what is best for the City and sometimes that comes into conflict. We have a mandate to follow the adopted priorities and one is to deal with traffic, transportation, and public safety. It was not lost on him about the thirty-three traffic accidents. If the City takes no action on this intersection and something happens that is preventable, such as a major accident, it would be troubling. He is mindful of the fact that the driverless vehicles and emerging technology are going to help. He does not just represent the people that showed up this evening to voice their belief that no action should be taken. He also represents the residents like Mr. Ross who said the traffic in this area is unbearable. It is interesting that this traffic situation is for about thirty minutes to one hour. The traffic is usually not that bad in the summer. What is different about this intersection is that the level of service can go from an F to a B, and that caught his attention. If this were a \$20 million cost, the project would be too expensive. If this were a \$10 million cost, it would be too costly for the benefit. The cost for either of the proposed projects is \$2 million. Whether the TSPLOST funds are being used is irrelevant. This is still the taxpayer's money and we have to decide if this is the best use of funds. If we do not complete this project, it does not mean we construct \$2 million worth of sidewalks. We have \$11 million programmed for the TSPLOST. The funds will be used at other intersections. He asked what the cost is to determine the real impact on adjacent property owners from a roundabout design. There is also the added fact that this is a historic site.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated staff would need to go through the engineering process. Staff received an engineering estimate from a consultant of approximately \$150,000 to \$160,000. The City would need to issue a notice to proceed for that amount. Staff would know more about what the impacts would be about half way into a process that takes about eight months.

Council Member Bauman stated he is not prepared to support this project until he knows the actual impact. He met with Ms. Cope on her property on Sunday. Setting aside the issue with the plat and right-of-way, it is one thing if the project will encroach over the curb a few inches. It is another thing if it starts going into her front porch. He assumes the results will be somewhere in between the two. This is a good project, but it needs to be an incremental process. In the meantime, we will see what impact the new Braves stadium has on traffic. He is very concerned about Mr. Card. He knows that Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell has met with Mr. Card. He would be reluctant to approve an eminent domain on these properties. The people that are most impacted by this are willing to deal with the traffic.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated staff would move forward with the purchase order for the full amount for design. If we do not use all of the funds, the design can be stopped.

Council Member Bauman asked what the upstream and downstream impact will be if the project moves forward. He is concerned about Long Island Drive at Mt. Paran and Jet Road at Mt. Paran. He asked what happens when a driver reaches Highway 41 headed westbound past the Jackson Elementary.

Assistant City Manager Bryant Poole stated the traffic gets congested again.

Council Member Bauman stated the safety issue is compelling. Many people drive to Chastain Park and that left turn movement would be very helpful. He wants to be sure that if the City does the minimal work that we know if the impact on adjacent property owners will be minimal or significant and what the upstream and downstream impact will be. He asked that the City have another opportunity to publicly vet this design. This is a good project that will improve the level of service and safety. However, he draws the line at a major impact and a contentious eminent domain fight with the residents.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated the City would not be able to get into the fact of what this project might do to some of those other areas. The next major intersections are about a mile or more away. If we did increase the operations at this area, who is to say it would not attract traffic from some of the other cut through roads. There is high-end modeling staff could potentially do, but even at its best, it could be a guessing game.

Council Member Bauman asked if the critical path is Mr. Card's property because of the garage.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated it is one of the more critical paths. This is the minimum diameter the City can move forward with for the roundabout in order to minimize the impact on adjacent parcels. This is the smallest roundabout the City can do and still have it operate it with the occasional truck that drives through it. In addition, to make sure the roundabout has traffic calming capabilities and does not allow people to drive straight through it with deviating their turns.

Council Member John Paulson stated he hears conflicting stories from residents in the area. Some say the traffic is not that bad and others say it is. He asked if the traffic counts are in a database.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated he looked back at the traffic volume for the last several years and the daily volumes were found on the roadway segments and not the turning movement count. In one day, one of the roadways went well above a 10,000 car count. What staff collected was two days' worth of counts for an average day during an average week when school was in session. He feels comfortable with the numbers. There are significant volumes in this area.

Council Member Paulson stated the roundabout completed at Northridge Road was shrunk in size, because they paved part of the circular area.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated the proposed roundabout allows for a smaller footprint. Staff will collect volumes for this intersection. The counts will be collected on Powers Ferry, south of the intersection, and Mt. Paran, which is located west of the intersection. Staff will look at the impact of the Atlanta Braves traffic on this intersection very closely.

Council Member Ken Dishman asked about the volume being measured through the intersection. He asked about the queue and wait times.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated based on the model, the queues on the westbound approach can be over four minutes.

Assistant City Manager Poole stated he often drives through this area around 6:00 p.m. and the traffic is still heavy at that time as well. The wait time is at least four to six minutes.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated a resident may say that the traffic is not bad for the area, but staff has to look at the cumulative impact.

Council Member Chris Burnett stated there are homes and the old building at the northeast and northwest corners of this intersection. There is a neighborhood on the southwest corner with a brick wall around that. There is a fair amount of area between the street and that brick wall. There is a school on the southeast corner with a fair amount of land area between the street and the parking lot. He asked if staff could look at the option of moving the traffic circle south, so there is as little disruption to the two residential properties as possible.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated staff can look at shifting the center point of the roundabout south in the preliminary engineering process. This approach is about balancing the impact for the concept. In the primary engineering, we can try to minimize impact on the more sensitive areas.

Council Member Burnett asked if staff has looked at the traffic counts at the stop sign north on Powers Ferry Road where Powers Ferry meets with Dudley Lane. He asked if there are traffic issues in this area in the afternoon.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated he knows staff has studied that intersection, but he does not have the data available this evening. Staff has been working with that neighborhood with some issues in the area.

Council Member Burnett asked if staff has had the opportunity to meet with the school. During the mornings and afternoons is when the higher traffic volume comes through the area because of school. He would like to know the school's thoughts on the proposed projects.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated he had a casual conversation with the school. They did seem interested in having something done to help improve the traffic operations. Crosswalks have been implemented into these improvements as well. The school does not have much walking traffic. He is working with the school. He does not have their official comment at this time. They do seem interested in providing some type of relief.

Mayor Paul stated there are three options for this intersection: a traffic light, a roundabout, or a no build. He asked what is Council's preference.

Council Member Sterling stated he thinks what Council Member Burnett brought up is the best thing. He does not think the City can do nothing when the intersection could go from a traffic grade of F to a B, if a

roundabout is installed. For a majority of the citizens it is not a rationale decision to do a no build. For safety reasons, a roundabout seems to make the most sense. At the engineering stage, he likes the idea of looking at a way to be sensitive to the residential property owners. What Council Member Bauman stated regarding a partial study to get some of the engineering completed may make some sense. He does not want to set a precedent on doing that on these types of projects. One of the things that Council receives the most comments on is traffic. He asked how much time the City will lose at the four month mark.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated there is a schedule for the TSPLOST of about five years. He believes this process can be done efficiently. Staff will report to Council on the progress of the engineering study while having meetings with the residents to make sure all are updated on the process.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio stated at this point the City should do a no build solution. He would like to defer this decision to see what happens with the Atlanta Braves traffic. It seems there is not enough information or a consensus of opinion of the neighbors. At this point, this project should be postponed for now and revisited at a later time.

Council Member Paulson stated for every design contract we bid and get awards for, the City can always stop in the middle. All engineering projects are like this where Council receives updates. In the interest of finding out the exact impact, he is leaning towards the idea of putting an engineering design together to see the options. He is not ready to spend \$2 million on this project, but he does want to know the details from an engineering point of view. He would be concerned if the City chose to do nothing. There is a traffic problem at in this area.

Interim Traffic/Transportation Manager Campbell stated of the thirty-three collisions that occurred at this intersection, six of them involved injuries.

Council Member Dishman stated he agrees with Council Member Sterling. The opportunity to go from a level of service F to a B is significant. He agrees with Council Member DeJulio's concern with taking into consideration the local neighbors and he agrees with Council Member Paulson. We should go ahead and proceed with the study. We have the opportunity to learn from additional information that we receive from the engineers. We should proceed with the study.

Council Member Burnett stated when he was elected to this position it was in the middle of GDOT's traffic circle project at Riverside Drive and I-285. He never realized there are so many traffic engineers that live in his district. Everyone was convinced that was going to be the worst thing that ever happened to Riverside Drive. For about two hours a day between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., there is still traffic in the area. He is convinced that for twenty-two hours a day there is a meaningful improvement in this area over what was there before. He has seen firsthand the benefits of traffic circles for an area. He would be inclined to support Council Member Dishman or Council Member Paulson. It is very important to him to address the concerns of the homeowners in the immediate area. This can actually be a community beautification project, if it is done correctly. We have to be very sensitive to the homeowners in the immediate area. We should study the project very closely. We can always stop it if we do not feel like the benefits support the neighborhood issues or the expense. We should continue the study and evaluate our options.

There was a consensus of Council to proceed to the next stage in the process with the engineering study.

City Management

2. 17-118 Discussion on Draft Policy Regarding Bookings for the Performing Arts Center

PAC General Manager Michael Enoch gave the City Springs Performing Arts Center Recommendation on Operating Guidelines, Governance and Booking Guidelines PowerPoint presentation.

Mayor Rusty Paul asked if PAC General Manager Enoch is for or against affiliated groups.

PAC General Manager Enoch stated he is for affiliated groups. It will give more access for the community to have a diversity of events throughout the calendar year. The affiliated groups would not have an office in the building and would not have storage of their equipment.

Council Member Chris Burnett asked if the City wants to start the Sandy Springs theatre guild, would that be a resident group or an affiliated group.

PAC General Manager Enoch stated it would be an affiliated group under this policy. The City will not have offices, storage space and places for the groups to build sets. The City would be able to commit to the groups that they would be able to have seventy shows per year.

Mayor Paul stated a resident group will be housed in the building. They will have offices and storage in the building. The City would be moving forward with affiliated groups that will come in and utilize the space on a set calendar every day and everything else is off site. The City has been approached by a significant number of arts and cultural groups in the performing arts area. He asked if they are fine with being affiliated groups as opposed to residents.

PAC General Manager Enoch responded yes. At the meeting held last Monday at Heritage Sandy Springs there were representatives for about twenty-five to thirty arts groups in the community. Almost all of the emails received were positive. He feels comfortable that the groups area agreeable to this policy.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio asked if there are any requests for residence.

PAC General Manager Enoch stated he thinks there were a couple of people in that meeting that hoped to have resident status. A number of people have contacted him that are looking for homes for their arts groups. After the structure was explained and how the bookings will occur, most of the groups understand.

Mayor Paul stated if there is just the symphony and the ballet, his demographics might attend these events. One thing we need to make sure of is that the PAC events appeal to the entire community.

PAC General Manager Enoch stated at this point there are about twenty rentable spaces in the PAC. There is space for everyone with different sizes and different capabilities.

Council Member Andy Bauman asked where something that the City initiates would fit into the PAC schedule.

PAC General Manager Enoch stated that could fall into the category of City of Sandy Springs event. The City has the ability to have the first hold, if that is our desire. If the City wants to create festivals on an annual basis, that can be done. The other possibly would be events and concerts. If we knew a popular artist would be in the area and the City was able to book that artist, then the City could do so.

Council Member Bauman asked if the City staff comes up with a program in September or May, would the dates be held by City staff initiating the program.

PAC General Manager Enoch responded yes. Because we are running an open book and this is a public record, we need to make sure to do that. If he wants to have a date for the City, he needs to hold that date.

Mayor Paul stated PAC General Manager Enoch has done a very good job and this is a comprehensive list. He sees one omission he wants clarification on. He has captured the goal and mission of what the City is trying to do very well with the exception of one area, and that is arts education. One of the things that Council and he felt strongly about early on is some opportunity to do arts education. Since we are going to have affiliated groups that will have some kind of ongoing relationship with the City, he would like to explore the opportunity. We know that some of the arts groups that are looking to affiliate have world-class talent. We would like to be able to tap that talent in some way or another for our community,

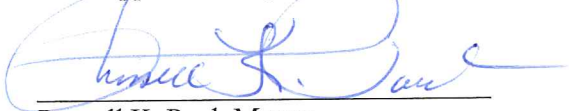
particularly our children. He would like to see added in some capacity of arts education. He wants to know how the City can utilize its affiliated groups to help accomplish that mission.

PAC General Manager Enoch stated he agrees. He should have said arts education groups. He believes that is in the affiliated area. The groups have called him about coming to see her their programs. He stated if they want to do business with the City, we would like them to be in the arts education business also. That is a priority. He had contact with a company from Nashville that is a development company for talent and they want to have a public/private partnership with the City. When he is in public he asks people about the PAC and they let him know that arts education is important to them. They want a place to be able to take their family. They do not want to have to go somewhere else in the area. That is one of our missions that is most important.

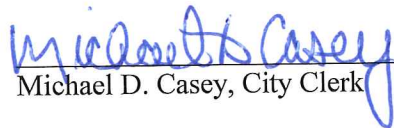
There was a consensus of Council to move this item forward to the April 4 City Council meeting Consent Agenda.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Date Approved: April 4, 2017



Russell K. Paul, Mayor



Michael D. Casey, City Clerk