

Work Session of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on April 2, 2024 at 6:00 PM, Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

I. Staff Discussion Items

Mayor Rusty Paul called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. 2024-069 Retaining Wall Material Text Amendment

Matthew Anspach, Senior Planner, presented the Retaining Wall Material text amendment.

We have had many instances in the past several years where permittees proposed the use of alternative facing elements, (e.g. welded wire form or other elements), other vegetative facings, or other masonry materials, but could not approve this form – as it was not an approved material in our Development Code.

The Development Code allows only walls clad in brick, stone, or stucco, or walls constructed of non-beveled modular blocks. Staff believe that new alternatives can be utilized in certain circumstances, especially those that do not impact the general public or neighboring property owners. This amendment would allow the use of natural vegetative walls, in certain applications, as an alternative to a concrete wall clad in brick, stone or stucco. This type of wall construction typically results in about a 30% cost savings, which can be significant depending on the size of the wall to be constructed.

Examples of Living/Earthen Walls



Councilmember John Paulson said this topic came up about a month ago when Councilmember Tibby DeJulio and I visited a site where the quality of the backfill replacing the retaining wall was not suitable

for concrete block facing. The City does not offer alternative facing elements. This text amendment is about the facing elements and not the structural stability of the wall mass itself. With a vegetated face, the contractor could save the development about \$50,000 to \$60,000, but this cannot be considered with the way the code is written. These are good examples of standard industry vegetative options. Thank you staff for reviewing this and bringing the alternatives forward. There may be a situation where an architectural panel is not needed, and a vegetated face can be used to save money and does not impact the aesthetics. Some restrictions will be needed as the vegetation grows. My recommendation is Council approves to give our contractors some alternatives going forward.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio said when **Councilmember Paulson** and I went to the site near my home, the contractors discussed how superior the vegetative walls were for stormwater. In Sandy Springs, one problem in abundance is stormwater, especially my district where there are tremendous stormwater problems. What is your opinion about stormwater?

Senior Planner Anspach said an engineer can provide more information. Anytime concrete is replaced with vegetation, chances of that concrete absorbing water versus the vegetation is much lower. Having vegetation as the face, or a part of the system, is always an improvement.

Councilmember DeJulio said I am in favor of this.

Mayor Rusty Paul said we look forward to this returning to Council.

B. 2024-070 Request for Mayor and City Council Consideration of Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Solicitation

William H. Martin, Jr., AIA, Public Works Director, presented the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Solicitation.

Staff recommends submitting five project applications to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) for the 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Solicitation for the following projects:

1. Path 400 Trail Extension project, within the City of Sandy Springs City limits
2. Roswell Road North End Boulevard
3. Roberts Drive Sidepath, Phase 1
4. Hammond Drive Operational Improvement from Boylston Drive to Roswell Road
5. Roswell Road Safety Project from Cliftwood/Carpenter Drive to Hammond Drive

The ARC periodically opens a call for projects to award federal funding to projects for inclusion in the long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and TIP. The last ARC project solicitation was in 2021. The current project solicitation period opened on March 4, 2024 and closes on May 6, 2024. Staff has reviewed and screened the City's existing projects and plans and have identified five projects that are well-suited for federal funding under the ARC TIP solicitation, including two existing federally-funded projects and three additional capital projects. With the project submittals, the ARC requests that the City prioritize the project applications. Staff recommends the following projects be submitted to ARC for inclusion in the TIP and RTP.

Priority	Project	Phase	FY	Federal Request	Local Match
1	PATH 400 Trail Extension	CST	FY25	\$14,378,474	\$3,594,618; TSPLOST/CIP
2	Roswell North End Boulevard	ROW	FY27	\$3,920,000	\$980,000; 2021 TSPLOST
3	Roberts Drive Sidepath Phase 1	Design	FY25	\$216,000	\$54,000; 2021 TSPLOST
4	Hammond Drive, between Boylston and Roswell Rd	Design	FY27	\$480,000	\$120,000; future TSPLOST
5	Roswell Rd Safety Project from Cliftwood/Carpenter Drive to Hammond Drive	Design	FY27	\$560,000	\$140,000; Future TSPLOST

Staff has prepared cost estimates for each project recommended for the TIP solicitation. The total local match required for all projects is \$4,888,618.00 to leverage \$19,554,474.00 in federal funds.

ARC TIP Project Selection and Prioritization

2024 ARC TIP Solicitation

- Project Selection
 - Staff have screened potential projects based on criteria
- Prioritization Process
 - Top priority: Projects with at least one phase already in the TIP
 - Higher priority: Projects that need additional funding in earlier fiscal years
- *Jurisdictions must identify priority for each project application relative to each other*



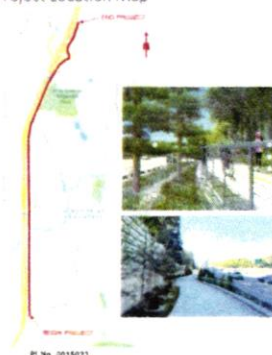
Mayor Rusty Paul asked are these projects driven by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) requirements, not ARC?

Public Works Director Martin said yes. ARC is the City's Metropolitan planning organization and if we are going to pursue federal transportation funds, we must go through them to obtain it.

PRIORITY 1 – PATH 400 Trail Extension

- Project already in TIP, FN-304
- Construction to begin in Summer/Fall 2024
- Request: additional construction funds for FY 2025
 - Federal Funds Request: \$14,378,474
 - Local Match: \$3,594,618
 - Total: \$17,973,092

Project Location Map

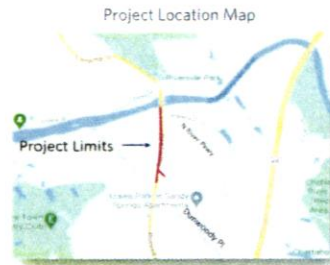


Councilmember Jody Reichel asked what is the distance of the Path 400 Trail Extension?

Public Works Director Martin said the exact measurement is not available tonight. Currently out for bid is the portion of the Path 400 Trail up to Windsor Parkway from the City limits and beyond reaching Atlanta, and then from I-285 SR-400, all phases considered that we can bid now, to Ridge View Middle School. That is the portion of the path between Windsor Parkway and Ridgeview Middle School which is what we are seeking \$14,378,474 with a City match of \$3,594,618 to pursue. This is the same dollars we are pursuing with the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant as we seek sources to potentially support this project.

PRIORITY 2 – Roswell Rd North End Boulevard

- Project already in TIP, FN-352 (Design funds only)
- ROW to start in November 2026
- Request: additional right-of-way funds for FY 2027
 - Federal Funds Request: \$3,920,000
 - Local Match: \$980,000
 - Total: \$4,900,000



PRIORITY 3 – Roberts Drive Sidepath Phase 1

- Concept report is complete
- Would score well based on TIP Solicitation criteria
- Request: initial design funds for FY 2025
 - Federal Funds Request: \$216,000
 - Local Match: \$54,000
 - Total: \$270,000



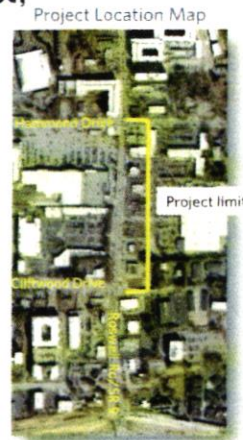
PRIORITY 4 – Hammond Drive, Roswell Rd to Boylston Drive

- Phase 2 of Hammond Drive Corridor Project
- Would score well based on TIP Solicitation criteria
- Request: initial design funds for FY 2027
 - Federal Funds Request: \$480,000
 - Local Match: \$120,000
 - Total: \$600,000



PRIORITY 5 – Roswell Rd Safety Project, Hammond Dr to Cliftwood Dr

- Top Priority from Access Management Plan
- Would score well based on TIP Solicitation criteria
- Request: initial design funds for FY 2027
 - Federal Funds Request: \$560,000
 - Local Match: \$140,000
 - Total: \$700,000



2024 ARC TIP Solicitation Next Steps

Next Steps

- Finalize list and priority of projects to submit to ARC under the 2024 Call for Project
- Commit to local support for each project at the April 16, 2024 Council Meeting
- Prepare and submit project applications by May 6, 2024, 5:00PM

Councilmember Reichel asked what are the chances of getting all five projects getting approved? How many did the City get last year?

Kristen Wescott, Transportation Unit Manager, Public Works said we have not sought to get this many projects into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for some time and a call has only been done every other year. At the last call for projects, we advanced the Roswell Road North End Boulevard which was our only project. At that time, we asked for the entirety of that project but only received a portion to start on design. It is a big ask. There are two existing projects and three new projects. An advantage to introducing these projects to ARC is if the project was not successfully considered, maybe it will be in the future.

Councilmember Reichel asked if the City requests funding for one through five and gets \$4,000,000, which priority does this go towards?

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Wescott said that is why the City must submit the priorities. Staff will be contacted for questions about the application or to be notified of available funds, and to decide how much to put towards each project.

Councilmember Reichel asked when will we know the status of the funding request?

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Wescott said it may be later in the year around fall, but it may be pushed to December.

Mayor Paul said it must be approved by the ARC board.

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Wescott said It is a long approval process as they consider applications amongst every other jurisdiction.

Mayor Paul said it is a very cumbersome, long, and difficult process.

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Wescott said they also must match projects against the different federal funding programs, whether it is congestion mitigation, surface transportation, or transportation enhancements, and balance it across the region.

Mayor Paul said it is a challenge. The focus at ARC now is largely driven by federal requirements and they do not want projects that affect only Sandy Springs, but includes Dunwoody, Roswell, Brookhaven, and the entire region. This is why these projects have been chosen. Hammond connects Dunwoody and the Perimeter market over into Cobb County, and it is a major thoroughfare through there. All fits within the ARC box but there is still no guarantee.

Public Works Director Martin said we had an opportunity with a municipal government focused open house last week to vet these projects with ARC staff to confirm our assumptions on what we needed to apply for and more. We began the process of at least getting ARC visibility on projects that are on our mind for future years. Path 400 was no surprise, and they are aware we want funds, and we will keep pursuing all sources.

Mayor Paul said an advantage is it connects into the trail system in the City of Atlanta, and it is a regional project with regional impact.

Councilmember Melissa Mular asked how can the public find more information about these projects? Are they on the website?

Public Works Director Martin said yes for some projects but not sure what is published other than the access management study with the recommended implementation plan in the back. That is where we have extracted this project from to begin the process. Hamond Drive widening is well publicized throughout. We had the early concept study work that talked about the entire corridor, and then the later work that talks about the focused area that we are expending T-SPLOST funds on now.

Councilmember Mular asked will this project be done after the widening from Boylston Drive to Roswell Road? What is the order?

Public Works Director Martin said we are asking for design dollars in FY 2027 which would be on the heels of completing the intersection and construction of the four-lane section between Boylston and Glenridge. We begin design to posture this project to pick up some portion. Our challenge is if we tried to execute the entirety of the Hammond project it would have been the entirety of the then T-SPLOST 2021 program. We are looking for companion fund sources and we are now eligible for funds for the Hammond Widening Project and that timing would begin design in FY27. We are looking for the T-SPLOST matching funds or the vote in FY26, then collections in FY27 which would fit well with it. The order is the intersection, widening, and this project next.

Councilmember Melody Kelley asked is there a special project number for the couple projects funded by this program?

Public Works Director Martin said it depends on the funding source. For instance, funds for the Path 400 Trail Extension and Roswell Road North End Boulevard are administered and provided through the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). We will have a GDOT Project Identification (PI) number for each project which helps with the coordination on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) needed early in the project. A project not on this list because we need more funds is the Roswell Road South of I-285 Access to Transit Project. It is numbered differently due to a different system, and we got those dollars via a different process.

Councilmember Kelley asked how can the public keep track of the projects that are currently funded?

Public Works Director Martin said GDOT maintains a robust website.

Mayor Paul said you can also go to the ARC website to view the entire TIP with various information.

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Wescott said please visit www.atlantaregional.org/TIP to find projects in the entire region beyond Sandy Springs.

Mayor Paul said you must find the City of Sandy Springs because there are hundreds of projects on that list.

Public Works Transportation Unit Manager Wescott said the information can be filtered. Fulton County is big and data is split between Fulton North (FN) and Fulton South (FS). Projects can also be found by sponsor.

Councilmember Kelley asked are funds for the North End Boulevard Project being requested because there will be a shortage?

Public Works Director Martin said we have not yet awarded design. With the paperwork completed on behalf of GDOT we can now complete our design award process and begin design. That is based on an earlier funded scoping study, and we came up with estimates for design, construction, and right-of-way acquisition as a part of that. We now have a forecasted amount for right-of-way, and we have experienced cost growth across the spectrum for all T-SPLOST projects. We are requesting GDOT program funding now to assist in future right-of-way acquisition.

Councilmember Kelley asked does the City expect to collect \$9,000,000 in T-SPLOST II?

Public Works Director Martin said yes. Based on the scoping study we may need more money and are asking for help where we can get it in the interest of being able to timely advance that project.

Councilmember Kelley asked is it customary to use future T-SPLOST funds that have not been approved for matching?

Public Works Director Martin said we reviewed the model language that ARC gave on local funding matches. We believe we are on good grounds indicating that as we gain funds in that particular requested year, we will have monies available to do that. There is a challenge with binding a future Council against that, but Council can choose not to accept the money.

Councilmember Kelley asked can there be a different source for the match?

Public Works Director Martin said yes if the City wants to pursue.

Mayor Paul said there is some risk because those funds must be voted on in a referendum. Not only does a future Council have to be involved but the voters must approve those funds. For planning purposes, which is what this is about, you anticipate you will have those and if you do not end up with them, you must start adjusting. Council will vote on this in two weeks. Please have any questions between now and then answered.

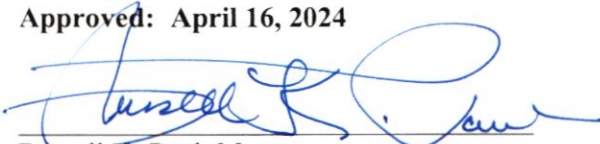
II. City Council Discussion Items

Mayor Paul said it is important everyone be vigilant and monitor the weather overnight because a lot of bad weather is expected in Sandy Springs. The most dangerous time for storms is when it is dark, and you are asleep and cannot hear what is going on. Set your phone to hear alerts that will wake you. First Responders and Public Works are ready to deal with this as the latest projection shows it is coming over the City. We must be prepared. Please follow social media and the weather reports to keep informed.

Secondly, I received notice today from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that the City's grant application for the Springway Trail Segment was not awarded. We hoped to receive funding but there is no guarantee.

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

Approved: April 16, 2024



Russell K. Paul, Mayor

Raquel D. González, City Clerk