

Work Session of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on September 16, 2025 at Following PFA, Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

I. Staff Discussion Items

Mayor Rusty Paul called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m.

A. 2025-206 Solidarity Sandy Springs Update

Jennifer Barnes, Founder, Solidarity Sandy Springs, presented the Solidarity Sandy Springs Update.

Founded at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Solidarity Sandy Springs (SSS) has rapidly evolved from a temporary emergency food pantry into a vital community resource serving over 100,000 shoppers in four years. The organization operates a free-choice market that empowers shoppers to select nutritionally dense food items, supported primarily by volunteers and local donors. With a growing number of individuals served, the demand for their services continues to rise significantly, underscoring the importance of sustained support. To support their program, SSS received \$25,000 in funding from the City during fiscal year 2026.

Solidarity by the Numbers

	# Shoppers	Llbs of Food	# Volunteers
2024	26,522	1+Million	5,000+
YTD 2025	22,762	1+Million	5,000+
*Need 200 volunteers a week for a total of 600 volunteer hours.			

Mayor Paul thanked everyone at Solidarity Sandy Springs for their efforts. This organization has grown and has become an indispensable part of this community.

Councilmember John Paulson asked how does someone become a volunteer?

Solidarity Sandy Springs Founder Barnes said they should visit www.solidaritysandysprings.org, which also includes information on special projects and having a food drive.

Councilmember Jody Reichel thanked Solidarity Sandy Springs for giving people the opportunity to volunteer. The City of Sandy Spring is stronger, kinder, and grateful.

II. Public Works

B. 2025-207 Capital Sidewalk Program Update

Wesley Waters, CIP Unit Manager, Public Works, presented the Capital Sidewalk Program Update.

An updated Priority Scored Sidewalk Candidate list is being presented for consensus and for consideration in the upcoming Transportation Master Plan Update. Consensus is also sought for a recommendation to increase the Gap Fill Sidewalk Program funding limit from \$50,000 to \$200,000.

The Capital Sidewalk Program segments are currently being advanced by TSPLOST 2021 Funding. There

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are 20 segments total with 11 having been completed, 4 currently in construction and 5 in active design. A draft Priority Scored Sidewalk Candidate list was presented to Mayor and Council on February 4, 2025.

Subsequent outreach was conducted for the letters of intent to donate right of way. Interest was expressed by some individuals and neighborhoods, and one neighborhood group obtained letters to increase their segment score and submitted them to the City.

Capital Sidewalk Program Information – Funding Categories

Three funding sub-categories have been utilized within the program.

1. Priority Scored List (Priority scored projects are currently being advanced with TSPLOST 2021 Program Funding).

- a. Candidate Projects must be on the Sidewalk Network Master Plan to be eligible for funding. To request additional segments for consideration, Citizens are encouraged to call the Call Center at 770-730-5600 to be directed to the Sidewalk Program staff within Public Works. Alternatively, they can enter their request on the online Sandy Springs Sidewalk request form.
- b. The current Draft Priority Scored list and more information regarding upcoming steps is included within the following slides.

2. Gap Fill Sidewalk Program (Under \$50K)

- a. Segments with estimated values under this limit are considered for priority funding.
- b. Due to increased costs and MCC request at the 3/15/23 Council meeting, staff was requested to evaluate increasing funding limit for the Gap Fill Program.
- c. More information on the proposed Gap Fill candidates is presented within the following slides.

3. Neighborhood Program (No current candidates have been identified, nor funding has been allocated)

- a. Neighborhood Petition – 65% approval from the impacted property owners is required
- b. Cost of design and construction is shared with the City and the Neighborhood – 25% by the Neighborhood and 75% by the City
- c. Requested section is scored and once the neighborhood can provide the matching funding, the final design and cost is presented to the Mayor and City Council for consideration of approval and funding

Capital Sidewalk Program Information – Next Steps

1. Upcoming Steps for Priority Scored List

- a. Staff previously presented a Draft Priority Scored List at the February 4, 2025 MCC Council Work Session.
- b. The Sidewalks Webpage was previously updated and outreach for nonbinding Letters of Intent to Donate Right of Way was announced at that time.
 - i. This reference has been removed from the page as completed letters of intent packages were due to Public Works by end of May 2025.
 - ii. **A response was received for one segment - Lake Forrest from Mt.**

Paran to Burdette. Letters were obtained from 3 of 5 parcels along the segment which increased its Right of Way score from 5 to 6 out of 10.

iii. The updated prioritized list incorporating the Letters of Intent to Donate is presented for in the next slides.

c. The updated list is recommended for Council consensus and will then be included the Transportation Master Plan Update to be completed later in 2025.

2. Staff recommends increasing Gap Fill funding limit from \$50,000 to \$200,000.

a. There have been a limited number of projects (total of 3) to consider with a total cost below \$150K during the previous 5 years. There are currently 3 under this threshold.

b. There are 6 candidates that currently fit the criteria for this sub-category under \$200K for total value of \$888,855.

c. Available Fund Balance in the T6000 Capital Sidewalk Program Fund as of is 6/12/25 is \$998,931

Councilmember Andy Bauman asked does it cost \$750 a running foot? It was \$150.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said this is a budget number if built out with contingency for many years. This number also includes portion of right of way, lighting, and more.

Councilmember Bauman asked how much it would cost to underground the City's power lines.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said it is difficult to do and costs a lot more.

Councilmember John Paulson said we had discussions about other projects that have a sidewalk and that is where the numbers come from. The number is staggering and hopefully it comes down.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said there is analysis on some gap fill projects that are easier and have a less expensive per unit cost at about \$300.

Councilmember Bauman said with a downhill sidewalk, for example Burdette to Mount Paran where there is big section off a cliff, doing fill on a massive wall can be a startling number.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said some will have less walls and infrastructure but are still \$250 to \$300 a linear foot. This is an average and it can be more.

Councilmember Bauman asked is \$12,000,000 for the current TSPLOST?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said yes. For the next TSPLOST it could be \$20,000,000. We are working on executing and spending \$12,000,000.

Councilmember Bauman said none of these projects have money. All is for the next \$12,000,000 or \$20,000,000 which will either come from the general budget or the next TSPLOST.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said yes. We want consensus tonight to put it in the master plan to be listed for voters to see what is available for funding.

Mayor Paul asked where is the North River Drive gap fill?

Councilmember Melody Kelley said close to Dunwoody Place. It is a gap between a childcare facility and a multifamily community that I brought to Staff's attention.

Mayor Paul asked are you familiar with GDOT's new plan for that area? Would that be incorporated into this project?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said yes but it is further than Dunwoody Place.

Councilmember Melissa Mular said residents are ecstatic with all sidewalks put in since the City Started. When I moved into North Springs twenty six years ago there was no sidewalk or contiguous sidewalk along Dalrymple. Completion is near and people are happy for the sidewalk and to not have construction. This is fantastic because of the connectivity from the Greenway, Dalrymple and Roswell to Abernathy and back. Can a summary table by district be provided to Council in the next update?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said yes.

Councilmember Mular asked are there alternate funding sources above TSPLOST for sidewalks?

Eden Freeman, City Manager, said in the past, prior to TSPLOST, we set aside an amount every year from the General Fund. With the advent of TSPLOST it was natural to move it there.

Councilmember Mular said what about external funding such as grants?

City Manager Freeman said it is typically difficult to find grant dollars. There may be streetscape improvements for major corridors which have been successful along Roswell Road, using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in neighborhoods.

Councilmember Mular said my support is for the update to the policy for the gap fill to go from \$50,000 to \$200,000.

Councilmember Kelley said for right of way availability, the score out of ten appeared to be a three and many are multi-family communities. Are apartments interested in helping the City with the right of way?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said some apartments have not been asked, but historically they are not able to donate. Any commercial property that is not a single proprietor has a hard time getting lender release to donate right of way.

Councilmember Kelley asked how was it secured with Trail Segment 2A?

Kristen Byars Smith, Assistant City Manager, said Trail Segment 2A was a huge lift with the City's nonprofit partners. Both the PATH Foundation and the Sandy Springs Conservancy led in working with all property owners to coordinate that, and there was a lot of effort to convince the apartment complex to donate right of way.

Councilmember Kelley said it is a huge benefit to communities on that stretch and the score would be higher than three if pursued. There is an appetite for this and I would like to work towards that.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said there is time for that. It is also related to trails and types of projects that might be eligible for grants. If consolidated into one larger capital project, it could be presented as a trail when going with value, and pursued for funding or a project on its own. On this program, we typically do not go out to individual property owners or other projects either. Information about right of way donation is put out and people come to us with their intent to donate and we consider that with scoring.

Councilmember Kelley said the irony is that Trail Segment 2C goes the same route but abuts the waterway. The City might potentially build another eight figure trail that accommodates the river side of that stretch but the practical side, where we really need a sidewalk to connect folks to MARTA stations, schools, parks, and more, we do not have it. It is heartbreaking to put millions into a beautiful trail while the sidewalks servicing the same people are at the bottom of the list. My request is for more time to work with some of these stakeholders. With proximity to parks versus proximity to schools, all Adair Lane projects scored zero. Is there proximity to Morgan Falls?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said yes but it is further than what the criteria allows. The numbers can be provided that shows a tiered level within a certain distance.

Councilmember Kelley said it is walking distance from the athletic complex.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said it was not considered a public park but that can be discussed as it is a sports facility. We have filtered out some of the larger capital projects from this priority scored list. The run along Adair Lane does not exactly fit the scope of this program but a lot of people that use it would go along the road where it is needed. With the criteria we are using, that is the score but there is a need and it would be used.

Councilmember Kelley asked is the proximity to parks criteria and the proximity to schools a similar metric? I am interested in how one criteria gets a four out of five and the other a zero.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said this analysis can be provided to you.

Councilmember Bauman said a lot of time has been spent on schools, particularly elementary and middle schools where the City has looked at proximity, almost as a separate category and was a super priority. Lake Forest Elementary is an example. The City wanted sidewalks where people were walking to schools. We should look at any segments around the City that may be proximity to school. I support the \$200,000 gap fill as those are leveraged projects. Is the City still relentlessly pursuing under construction properties?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said yes. We will engage with the developer if there is a current or pending project. Also, in the Code the Sidewalk Master Plan must be coordinated in that way.

Councilmember Bauman said it calls for donation of right of way but much more detailed when they are coming to build.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said communication has helped.

Councilmember Bauman asked how can the City execute a faster plan?

City Manager Freeman said a lot of this goes back to the right of way and how much time it takes to negotiate with the property owners. Staff can return with a presentation on a faster plan.

Councilmember Bauman said from recent feedback on accessibility needs, is there a process to determine if the City has issues as it relates to existing built sidewalks? For example, if someone who is seeing impaired lives in a walkable area?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said we address those types of issues if complaints are received.

Councilmember Bauman said we can also look at the highest trafficked areas to create a more accessible environment. This includes people living in District 6 who may be interested. For example, Northside Drive from the new roundabout to Powers Ferry Landing area is critical to connect folks safely to the river. This segment would have a transformative effect on hundreds of homes.

Councilmember Paulson said this is a complex project in a big city with lots of sidewalks. These gap fill projects are needed. For example, from the Sandy Springs city line to Spalding Drive, about two hundred feet of sidewalk is needed but it was difficult to do. People walk this way all of the time and glad this sidewalk is listed. I support gap fill to \$200,000 as costs are more. Can these gap fill projects be made to design build projects to get a better price?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said research can be done. With this current TSPLOST, we bundled several gap fills into one design contract. They were bid out separately but we were able to consolidate the design work and got a lower per unit cost. With the permitting dispersed throughout, it is tough for someone to handle everything. With these designs, the program calls for us to accept donations for the right of way. The consultants that would normally help with these projects, are set up to purchase the right of way which slows the process. There are obstacles to do a true design build but we have bundled together as with the Powers Ferry area. Some would be under \$200,000. We will use our current tools and seek other opportunities.

Councilmember Paulson said I would like the City to consider saving money on simple projects. A rural city in Georgia is not spending \$750 per linear foot for sidewalks. For example, can there be a classification called temporary sidewalk? This would be the least expensive way to build a sidewalk and can be rebuilt for 10% of the cost. My challenge to Staff is to look at other ways of doing sidewalks to reduce the staggering costs.

William Martin, Public Works Director, said we are requesting consensus from Council regarding the proposal on gap fill with a \$200,000 limit and the recommended projects.

Mayor Paul said that is ordered without objection.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio asked how long it would take to get done.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said for similar projects on TSPLOST 2021, within a year and a half most were done. There are processes such as design and bidding which may take a few months. Also, we must get the right of way and coordinate with the property owners. We have help from Purchasing and will work to accelerate this.

Councilmember DeJulio asked is building sidewalks covered under eminent domain?

Dan Lee, City Attorney, said yes.

Councilmember DeJulio asked does the City need a permit to build its own sidewalks?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said technically no.

Councilmember DeJulio asked why is it done if not? This causes delays.

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said for visibility. If we deviate from the Code, that would increase the price and time it would take to build it to the full section. We document a deviation from the Code and do a permitting process to fill out that documentation. We have not been able to exercise the type of project that would give us eminent domain. We cannot exercise that when requesting donations with the program because eminent domain requires that an offer to pay for the property must be made. This is a challenge with the program.

Councilmember DeJulio asked is there a shortcut to this?

City Attorney Lee said as a practice, this Council has been hesitant to use eminent domain in residential neighborhoods for roadways.

Councilmember Reichel asked how often does the City need to use eminent domain to get sidewalks?

City Attorney Lee said there are steps to take prior to the use of eminent domain. Also, we have been dealing with a policy from Council to try and not use eminent domain in a residential neighborhood, which slows down the project and can move it to another area where people will give the right of way.

Councilmember Reichel asked does Sandy Springs try to work with another city, for example Dunwoody, if there is an opportunity?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said yes. Sandy Springs entered into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Atlanta on Dudley Lane, to finish from our city limit to Chastain Park. It was permitted within Atlanta and we hired the contractor. When Atlanta entered into the agreement, Dunwoody offered the opportunity to design and build it. We would have had to enter into the IGA and agree to pay the amount. During that time, Sandy Springs did not have the funding to back up that agreement and did not proceed, and it was higher than the funding on the Gap fill Sidewalk Program to work it there. If it were under \$200,000 today, Sandy Springs could proceed with the IGA with Dunwoody and have it done.

Councilmember Reichel asked did you come to Council to request additional money?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said it was discussed through Staff briefings.

Councilmember Reichel asked will that project be included with the gap fill projec for \$200,000?

Public Works CIP Unit Manager Waters said yes. Dunwoody Road is one of the six that will be included.

III. City Council Discussion Items

Councilmember Bauman said we have heard from many people, both at North Springs and at Riverwood, about school speeding tickets people are receiving in mass. There are two paths to go. We can either suspend the process or increase lights on the signage. It is a tricky situation but the goal of this is completely worthy. Can the City return to multiple warnings, \$5 and \$10 tickets, and by the time they

have their third, fourth, fifth or sixth ticket, there is less to complain about? This body is getting input from folks and there is no Council meeting for several weeks. Where does the City stand on this?

City Manager Freeman said this is an update. As of Friday, 2,274 citations have been issued. Of those, 1,736 occurred when signs were flashing to indicate that the speed limit was reduced to twenty five miles per hour. That is 76% of tickets issued during the time period from 7:20 AM to 8:20 AM and 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM. Furthermore, they have to be traveling ten miles above the posted speed limit. If they received a ticket during that time period, they were going thirty five or higher. The City's police department conducts a quality control check before signing off on the issuance of any of these citations. That means an officer reviews the footage and ensures that it is only issuing the citation to the vehicle and the tag is clearly captured in the frame. If there are two cars that make it through, they only issue one, and it is clearly visible. Furthermore, during the period when the lights were not flashing but school is in session, the signs are active and they are issuing tickets sighting at thirty-five, but only for vehicles going forty-five or higher. There were 538 citations issued then. That is 23%. Also 609 warnings were issued before enforcement began, 500 during the flashing period and 109 during regular hours. This program is closely regulated by the General Assembly and we anticipate some changes during the upcoming session. Two bills have been discussed and will carry forward into the next session. One of them does away with them completely. The other bill changes how they are being collected and all of the funds would have to be used in the school system and dedicated to school safety programs. We have considered changing the hours of enforcement but state law does not allow the City to make this change. We have also considered putting additional signage up. For example, this may be further back on Dalrymple or Heards Ferry because we only have two sets of cameras in the City. There is one set on Dalrymple near North Springs High School and one set on Heards Ferry near Heards Ferry Elementary School. There can be additional signage that says speed and force cameras ahead and that can be done within two to three weeks or, if Council would like to discontinue the program, the agreement with Red Speed allows the City to terminate with sixty days notice. That agreement is already going to terminate next year because that is the date in the original agreement. There was a delay having these installed because of the intergovernmental agreement that had to be worked out with Fulton County Schools. These were not installed and turned on until last year.

Councilmember DeJulio asked how much is the charge for the ticket?

City Manager Freeman said this information will be provided to you.

City Attorney Lee said only twenty-seven of tickets have been challenged in the City's court.

Councilmember Bauman said school just went back into session and we are getting many emails from people ready to challenge this. I received twenty-seven. This is disruptive and the goal is worthy. We must do something to substitute for this. There is speeding everywhere but getting caught on these two cameras.

City Attorney Lee said the amount of the citation is \$80.

Councilmember DeJulio said about four tickets have been paid by me for people who work for me in Warner Robins. The first one is about \$80 and each additional one is about \$130. Other places are using these too.

City Manager Freeman said it is \$75 for the first offense and \$125 for subsequent offenses.

Councilmember DeJulio said I have not received a complaint from my constituents but people from the City are sending their kids to high school.

Councilmember Mular said we sent them to each other and I tried to figure out the options. It is great we are discussing now.

Councilmember Mular said several councilmembers received emails from residents. People think they could potentially get a ticket if the lights are flashing. They are unaware that cameras are enforced while school is in session. It is not realistic to have lights flashing all day. The options are to update the signage or discontinue.

City Manager Freeman said Council direction is not needed to do new signage. The fundamental question is do you want to continue the program or not?

Mayor Paul said my emails have mostly been from parents saying to please keep them going. There are folks on both sides of this. I drive by Riverwood High School about five times a day and slow down as a result of cameras being there. It is an education process. I am fully supportive of additional signage warning people. Before we suspend it, I would like to hear from the parents of the schools to give them an opportunity to provide input. This should be a broader community conversation. At Riverwood, there are kids going across Heard's Ferry particularly in the afternoons, and cars not only speed but run the red light at full speed. This is at the three-way stop at Powers Ferry and Raider Drive. There is a lot of excessive speed and not paying attention to traffic signals that exist to maintain the normal flow of traffic.

Councilmember Reichel asked are tickets only given at certain times on Dalrymple?

City Manager Freeman said at all hours while school is in session but, it is enforced at two different speed limits. The hour before and after school is enforced at 25 miles, but a ticket can only be issued if going 35 miles or higher. The remainder of the time that school is in session Monday through Friday, it is 35 miles, but a ticket is only issued if going 45 miles or higher.

Councilmember Reichel asked what is the speed limit on Dalrymple?

Mayor Paul said it is 25 miles before and after school.

Councilmember Reichel asked what if the flashing light was not on?

City Manager Freeman said it is 35 miles.

Councilmember Reichel asked is someone given a ticket going 35 miles?

City Manager Freeman said no.

City Manager Freeman said we will have additional signage done. My request is for **Kenneth DeSimone, Police Chief**, to bring **Lieutenant Timothy Sheffield** to the next work session to provide an update on the practical application of what is happening.

Councilmember Bauman said since there was a warning period, can a mass pardon be done?

City Attorney Lee said there is no mechanism to legislate a pardon.

Councilmember Bauman said once the signs improve, you will lose sympathy for repeat offenders versus first time offenders where the signage was not good. There is speeding everywhere and there are two kinds of speeders. Is there a way to go back and deal with first time offenders? This is a function of due process.

The difference here is there is a camera. There is also the question about calibration. At the work session, police should also provide the process on calibrating to make sure devices are working properly.

Councilmember Reichel said it bothers me that during the day the flashing lights are not on and people are given tickets without a warning. What is the process for parents?

Mayor Paul said a letter is sent to Parent Teacher Student Organizations (PTSOs) about the issue and asking for their feedback. Also, there is the governance council to have conversations with.

Councilmember Paulson said if the speed limit is normally 35 miles when the lights are flashing and drops to 25 miles, you cannot miss them.

City Manager Freeman said also consider if during regular hours it is at 35 miles but, a ticket is only issued if going 45 miles or over. Dalrymple is challenging to get up to in that segment.

Councilmember Paulson said you are saying when the lights are not flashing, the standard speed limit applies. This is not an undue hardship to a regular driver. I am in favor of the signage and have less sympathy about how this is going on today.

City Attorney Lee said historically state law and city ordinances have always treated school zones differently. The speed limit is lower and it has not changed with this MOU with the school board. In Georgia, 25 miles is historic. The way law enforcement polices school zones has not changed. Police have rules they must follow when they use radar and get a license from the Georgia Department of Public Safety. One is a ticket cannot be issued using a radar unless it is 10 miles over the speed limit. The difference here is that this mechanism of using a camera proves that a police car is a deterrent. The speed limit has not changed, just the mechanism for catching somebody who is speeding.

Councilmember Reichel asked why is the legislature considering getting rid of this?

City Attorney Lee said they are hearing the same complaints as this body.

Mayor Paul said there are two different bills. One did away with it and the other one modifies it. They both passed the House of Representatives and the Senate. Not sure there will be more clarity in January but, this is something that clearly Council has some concerns about and we should take a stronger look at it in an upcoming work session.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.