

Work Session of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on June 16, 2026 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. 2026-160 Data Strategy, Analytics, and AI Integration Update

Keith McMellen, Director of Data Strategy, Analytics, and AI Integration, presented the Data Strategy, Analytics, and AI Integration Update.

Project Updates

AI Pilot

Started late 2025

- Scoped for 20 users
- Expanded 37 users over time as demand increased
- Provided orientation on usage and guardrails

Perplexity

- Blend of models
- RAG – Augmented with our content

Municode

CivicClerk agendas/packets, minutes

Policies, procedures

AI Pilot Outcomes

Surveys

- Done at 30, 60, 90 days
- Tracked perception of AI, usage, time savings

Findings

- 2,800 hours of time savings for pilot group (projected over a full year)
- 100% of respondents would continue to use AI
- Most common uses were document review, content creation, data analysis

Enterprise AI

Scale up success of pilot

- Will be made available to all Staff
- Vendor led training – introductory and advanced
- “Office Hours” to support Staff ideas and use

GovAI

- Best balance of cost, features, and governance
- Built on OpenAI’s model with government focus

Enterprise AI – Key Features

Folios and Assistants

- Folios are containers for content
- Assistants leverage Folio content with custom instructions
- Automate tasks, simplify workflows

Evaluations

- New feature
- Monitor performance of assistants

Agentic AI

Council Meeting Minutes

- Download meeting transcript and agenda
- List of resolutions and ordinances to continue sequence
- Reference information for names, locations
- Automate generation of meeting minutes and “The Scoop” on public meetings

Chatbot

Public Website Deployment

- AI powered
- Answers user inquiries with information from the City’s website
- Goal to decrease routine information requests to call center and provide an alternative source of information for website users

Monitoring

- Chat summaries
- Sentiment analysis

AI and Permitting

AI Intake readiness

- Construction plan set completeness
- Affidavit verification

Status

- Feedback and iteration
- Summer 2026

Lucity Modernization

Current State

- Implemented more than 10 years ago
- No Citywide Customer Relationship Management software
- Challenges in finding, updating, and sharing ticket status
Various systems do not interact, requiring duplicate staff work and making it cumbersome to report final ticket status
- Inconsistent usage across departments
- AI/predictive features are not yet available
- Siloed, friction

Current Status

- Reviewing vendors and capabilities
- Involving departmental stakeholders
- Prioritizing the preservation and migration of historical data
- Ensuring that any changes improve service delivery
- Balance of cost, time, benefit

Desired Future State

- Modern, integrated technology
- Easily share and analyze data across departments
- Robust public facing portal
- Integrated with companion software, like OpenGov, reducing duplication of work
- Consistent use across departments
- Better data classification to identify trends
- Performance Management, analytics, and AI
- Frictionless service delivery

Next Steps

Upcoming Initiatives

- Lucity Modernization
- Enterprise AI
 - Additional Assistants
 - Continue to monitor and enhance governance
- Permitting
 - Phase 2 – Plan and Data Quality
 - Phase 3 – Substantive Review Support
- Chatbot
 - Model enhancements
 - Improved voice model support

Councilmember Melissa Mular asked can a high-level timeline on upcoming initiatives be provided?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said yes.

Councilmember Mular asked are there dependencies between the initiatives?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said they are separate. We hope to select a platform for Lucity soon. GovAI is in progress and all the features will be here this summer. Also, Chatbot is being deployed tomorrow

Councilmember Mular asked will there be self-service with the Lucity upgrade so residents can see and monitor tickets?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said yes. This is priority.

Councilmember Mular asked is there an associated communications plan for public to share information about what is available and what is improving?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said there is no official plan, but it has been discussed to share information on the website. The digital innovation webpage is available, but the content must be frequently updated.

Councilmember Mular said also consider The Scoop or Facebook, and public sessions as the different build seminars with permitting.

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said we are working on summarizing data for The Scoop.

Councilmember Mular asked is this discussion a topic with the Citizens' Leadership Academy?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said yes.

Councilmember Mular asked how public records will be handled for AI generated outputs.

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said this is currently being discussed and details will be provided at later date.

Councilmember Mular said this is a productivity tool. What measurements will determine success for what is being released to the public? Will there be dashboards to manage that?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said with permitting for instance, no effort is needed to monitor performance as it already built in. It is the same with Chatbot and we are continually monitoring the performance.

Councilmember Mular asked as data is normalized and across multiple applications, how do you ensure we do not get back into silo mode?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said as we will use more applications and AI as an integration point, this provides the opportunity to properly govern, shape, and control the data.

Councilmember Mary Ford said AI is a large change management initiative, and it requires constant reinforcement and training. Great progress had been made. Thank you for your efforts.

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said we are trying to reinforce that so progress is seen over time.

Councilmember Ford said as the release of the new ticketing system to the public gets closer, we should consider the expectations or guidelines to set for both the public and for Staff. This should be around frequency and speed, SLA updates, and depth of responses and updates, so that people have complete information.

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said this is a great opportunity for us to revisit a lot of processes mentioned.

Councilmember Andrew J. Chinsky asked will Council have access to Enterprise accounts?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said information about that can be provided later. It is like ChatGPT because it is running their model.

Councilmember Chinsky asked can AI full-fill open records requests?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said this is a potential application.

Councilmember Chinsky asked what data is being connected to the City's AI platform? How is it determined who has access?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said there is role-based access and the City has full control over who has access to what data. There have been security discussions to identify and address risks. GovAI has data detectors to detect a phone number or a social security number for instance, and we determined whether to redact, block, or monitor it.

Councilmember John Paulson asked when a Staff user does research using AI, will the information be stored for the next Staff user researching a similar subject?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said no. It is like ChatGPT. Information is not stored as it will be a records retention issue.

Councilmember Paulson asked what are your plans to go back and bring data forward?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said we will not go backwards because it is already done. We mostly reviewed format, length, and how data reads, and this will continue to be done going forward. GovAI is working on more integrations with CivicClerk as we want to avoid a manual process.

Councilmember Paulson asked what the communication strategy is for the public to have knowledge on these tools?

Carter Long, Communications and Public Relations Director, said the plan is for a soft launch of this presentation tomorrow and to issue a press release with all information early next week. Then it will be

published to the City's website so people will be knowledgeable of the process and how to use the tool moving forward. In addition, there will be newsletter updates, social media, and a PR agency for national media.

Councilmember Paulson said this is new and powerful technology, but it must be used correctly.

Communications and Public Relations Director Long said this is the importance of having a soft launch initially.

Councilmember Paulson said the public can now generate their own ticket, and there must be control over what the request is. How is the City managing the reality of requests?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said we discussed with vendors how to manage the public side in this process. For instance, must they create accounts? Can they report anonymously? We can see it happening potentially both ways. We have not discussed your concern, but it is valid.

Eden Freeman, City Manager, said residents can already create a ticket within Lucity, but cannot check the status. This is the big problem. Recall when Sandy Springs Works changed years ago to a GIS-based tool. If for instance, there was a pothole or sidewalk issue, you can report the issue on the City's website, under Sandy Springs Works. My number one requirement for the new system is that residents can view the ticket and see what the status is.

Councilmember Melody Kelley said tonight the budget will be considered for approval of a new office. There must be implications for your work. Will the creation of the new office impact your presentation?

City Manager Freeman said it is a restructuring where two positions will move to the new Office of Innovation and Delivery. In addition, the director of that office will oversee the coordination and push forward the overall innovation initiative for the City.

Councilmember Kelley asked will what we are trying to do change materially?

City Manager Freeman said no.

Mayor Paul said security is a big issue and a lot of time was spent on this. What are the challenges in making sure that you are asking the right person for information, and if not, how do we manage those situations in general?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said you must be an employee with a sandy springsa.gov address and this is controlled by security and single sign on. The chatbot is open to anyone, but the bot has no access to any system, and there are no means to authenticate to the website. The Lucity replacement modernization will be integrated into what we do next, and is a significant upgrade than where we are today. It will have modern architecture and more modern security practices. My presentation included how to handle authenticated users versus potentially anonymous reporters and may depend on the situation.

Mayor Paul said this is long way from where we were and other cities are not close to where Sandy Springs is today. We are leading and working with many vendors to figure this out. As the City serves as the alpha and beta test site, we are giving them free training, knowledge, and product development. As we go forward, we should look for opportunities to be part of the licensing process for these systems so that

whatever our contribution was toward the final product, the citizens of Sandy Springs get some compensation from that process. We are providing a lot of intellectual capital to a lot of different vendors as we go through this process, and we should consider opportunities to capture some value in that to ensure the City's contribution is recognized. This is a big opportunity to have public private partnerships because many vendors will take these ideas and processes to other cities who are not as far along as the City of Sandy Springs.

Councilmember Paulson said you are discussing the City building to enhance the current software provided. Who owns that improvement? Is it the City or the vendor?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said it is a combination and depends on the system. For instance, they own OpenGov because they are developing the AI, and the City is helping them test it. The City built agentic AI and owns it, but it can be shared with other cities.

Mayor Paul said the Legal Department must also be involved if licensing agreements for example are appropriate.

Dan Lee, City Attorney, said regarding ownership, while the City has some intellectual capital contributing to this, generally in this discussion you have the mechanism for using it, which is the vendor, and then the data. The data turns out to be mostly public record that does not belong to the entity of the City but belongs to the public. It is hard to monetize that. It appears that in these kinds of contracts, the City gains some repayment through the lessening of the cost of the process. That is how the City can be rewarded. The brief history in this field has been rewarded. It will be hard to monetize the ownership of public property. The data is unique and the manipulation of it is the vendor's patent generally. The legal world is now deciding what a copy is. When somebody thinks they have been wronged and wants the one that wronged them to preserve all the documentation, you get an expoliation letter, and it says you keep everything related to this subject. That happened in a case in Columbus for example. It will be a while before the legal world can address some of these very intellectual and complicated issues.

Councilmember Chinsky asked the does GovAI model train on the City's data? This is an important part of figuring out how this is getting monetized.

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said no. That is the benefit of having the Enterprise license.

Mayor Paul said some things the City is doing has value such as the code we developed.

Councilmember Chinsky asked would the City own that?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said yes, we should.

Mayor Paul said there is no barrier to the City copywriting the code.

Councilmember Mular asked is the City writing code as part of OpenGov?

Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration said no.

Councilmember Mular said we are working with them to understand the permitting process, and the data is the City's. When my career started, we designed payment systems with vendors. It was exclusive use for a period because we did not want our competitors to get it. Once that expired, we had the ability to get

royalties because we helped them develop that. To Mayor Paul's point, they have done this for a long time. If we could do that, we should.

Mayor Paul said the City is ahead of most cities. **Director of Data Strategy, Analytics McMellen and AI Integration** thank you for the work you do.

II. Public Works

B. 2026-161 Draft Transportation Master Plan

Kristen Wescott, Transportation Unit Manager, and Dave Cox, Director of Transportation Planning, Modern Mobility Partners (MMP), presented the Draft Transportation Master Plan.

Transportation plans guide transportation policy and network development in cities and prioritize transportation investments. In the time since the City of Sandy Springs created its most recent plan in 2020-2021, many projects have been completed or funded, and several studies have identified new projects. In August 2025, the City issued a contract to Modern Mobility Partners to compile all proposed transportation projects in the past 6 years, document existing conditions, perform a needs assessment, conduct public outreach, and develop a list of prioritized project recommendations, culminating into the 2026 Transportation Master Plan (TMP). This is an update on the project, including a public engagement summary and the proposed project list.

Public Engagement

The initial public outreach for the TMP included an informal "pop-up" at the Sandy Springs Farmers Market on November 15, 2025. An online survey was initiated the same day and was open for public input through February 18, 2026. A total of 171 people participated in the survey. The purpose of the initial outreach was to garner input on TMP goals and identify transportation issues facing Sandy Springs.

A second round of public outreach was conducted in February 2026, consisting of four meetings over three days, February 24 through 26. Details about projects that scored highest based on project screening criteria were presented on a series of display boards. The format of the engagement allowed for robust one-on-one dialogue with participants. Meeting attendees were asked for feedback about the projects as well as identify any transportation issues that were missing. 58 residents attended the in-person meetings, of which 36 provided written comments. An additional 18 comments were received online during a comment period that followed the sessions.

City Public Works staff also attended the Sandy Springs Education Force STEAM Showcase on March 17, 2026 and used the TMP as an example of how math, civil engineering and urban planning were used to develop project recommendations for the Plan.

Transportation Master Plan Proposed Project List and Policy Recommendations

The Draft Transportation Master Plan incorporates the public feedback and other metrics to prioritize transportation projects into a fiscally constrained ten-year program with short- and mid-term project lists. The near-term five-year list includes Tier 1 and some of Tier 2 of the recently approved TSPLOST26 list and other projects. The mid-term project list consists of subsequent project phases for near-term projects that can't be completed within the 5-year timeframe alongside some additional projects. To supplement

the location-specific transportation projects presented in the TMP, a series of transportation policies to advance the goals outlined in the plan are also included.

Mayor Paul said the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) provided an update on changes to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the recommendations to the ARC board. The Peachtree Dunwoody Road Operational and Safety Improvements Concept Study will not be funded by ARC, however, the North Side Drive Operational safety and Multi-modal Improvements Concept Study is recommended. Two other projects recommended for funding are the Roswell Road Northeast Boulevard Project and the Roberts Drive Sidepath Phase One Project. There are also challenges we should consider that create problems and safety issues, for instance rideshare and delivery trucks. Let us consider some alternatives to manage that better.

Councilmember John Paulson asked when will this return to Council?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said we can provide updates next month.

Councilmember Mary Ford said on the map in District 5, there are two collector streets. Why are they classified this way?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said they are based on traffic volume and the utility of the street. A major collector is feeding traffic from residential neighborhoods into the larger roads that ultimately flow into Roswell Road or GA-400.

Councilmember Ford said some neighbors say maps software directs people through neighborhood streets as opposed to Roswell Road for instance. Is the City encouraging more traffic on neighborhood streets with these classifications?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said navigation systems that route you, for example Google Maps, have their own independent routing systems for roads and will reroute you if there is traffic or other impedance, and is not directly tied to GDOT's functional class network.

Councilmember Melissa Mular asked will an announcement be made for the public to review the plan?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said Staff will make the announcement soon if not already there.

Councilmember Mular asked can the public provide input after they review the plan?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said yes, they can contact Staff.

Councilmember Mular said my request is that communication is clear for how people should submit their comments about the plan before it is adopted. Also, is the project ID numbering being changed, or is it specific to this plan?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said yes. We simplified for this effort only and is not affecting traditional project scoring?

Eden Freeman, City Manager, said it will not update the budget. Regarding communication to the public, this is the kickoff and was brought to Council first for comments.

Councilmember Melody Kelley asked if people were interested in the aspirational projects listed in the plan, when can they advocate for them to be prioritized?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said yes. Any feedback is appreciated.

Councilmember Kelley said my request is to include car dealership unloading along Roswell Road on the mayor's list of projects to consider. Like the City's Comprehensive Plan, do small area transportation plans typically come out of this effort?

City Manager Freeman said we have not done those previously.

Councilmember Kelley asked has data for projects completed in the past several years been considered in this master plan? Have improvements worked?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said we have not looked back at any of those project impacts or benefits and have only looked forward.

Councilmember Kelley asked is that outside the scope of this work?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said yes, but Staff retains the knowledge and are aware of the positive results of those projects that guide future discussion of new ones.

Councilmember Kelley said my interest is in that information. There have been some improvements, and enough time has passed to see crash data and more.

Councilmember Andrew J. Chinsky said the City's planning is towards car-oriented travel versus others. Spending should not be on car-oriented travel to solve the traffic problem when it will not. People need other ways to travel, and to walk or park in the City.

In District 6, located closely together are Riverwood High School, Heard's Ferry Elementary School, and Holy Innocents' Episcopal School. During morning and afternoon carpool, traffic is backed up for miles. My constituents will ask about projects to address issues there. What will the City do to address concerns from my constituents, or are there other programs that can be considered?

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said we consider peak hour traffic, which is usually from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and are aware of the problem. We take this into account when looking at intersection improvements, especially near Riverside Drive. It may not be a full capacity project, but there could be operational improvements to help mitigate some of that.

Councilmember Andrew J. Chinsky said it is difficult to approve a transportation plan that does not consider the thousands of people impacted every week during the school year. Regarding the Transportation Plan goals, there is no direct link between the plan and some of the housing issues we discussed with the Comprehensive Plan. The plan is to support a growing community, but the City lost population in the last five years, partly due to the expense of living here. A goal for the Transportation Plan should be to enable new housing for families to move to Sandy Springs because we may want to consider more dense housing in downtown Sandy Springs. Traffic planning and transportation planning must happen together to reduce traffic and create a walkable downtown area where people are living.

MMP Director of Transportation Planning Cox said some cities approved housing projects that do not allow parking for residents and either they must park off site or use other options. This may not work everywhere but is an idea to consider.

III. City Council Discussion Items

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.