

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, June 17, 2014, at 7:18 p.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

Councilmembers present: Councilman John Paulson, Councilman Ken Dishman, Councilman Graham McDonald, Councilman Gabriel Sterling. Councilman Andy Bauman was absent.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Community Development

1. Presentation on City Center Gateway Beautification Project

Director of Community Development Angela Parker gave a PowerPoint presentation on the City Center Gateway Beautification Project.

Councilman John Paulson stated the design color seems too solid. There was previous discussion on what percent of open area will be included in the bridge design and what happens when the open area increases.

Director of Community Development Parker stated she does not have the percentage of what the open area will be. The designers are preparing a panel that has smaller holes so there is less open area. The decorative design will have no holes and the color will be brighter.

Councilman Paulson stated the color of blue seems too solid and bright.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling stated the vision he had for the bridge was similar to the 14th Street bridge in Atlanta. This bridge is an extremely heavy bridge treatment. This concerns him because the bridge will be at this location for many years and this design seems somewhat tacky. He would still like to see the options for LED lighting on the bridge, since that will be more attractive. The proposed design is very different than what he had in mind. He would like to see wayfinding signs for the City Center that are also workable in other parts of the City. He prefers a lighter color treatment for the bridge.

City Manager John McDonough stated a lot of time, effort, and cost went into preparing the designs and that is why this is now before Council. If Council does not like the design, then it can be changed. About 400,000 people drive through this area every day and the bridge design should be right.

Councilman Tibby DeJulio asked what the cost of the bridge design and installation will be.

City Manager McDonough stated the cost will be several hundred thousand dollars. Staff does not have the final numbers at this time.

Councilman Sterling asked how much the tree plantings cost.

City Manager McDonough responded about \$200,000.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated he is overwhelmed by the color of the bridge, as well.

Councilman DeJulio stated several times he mentioned to staff a bridge that he passes on a regular basis and that is the bridge in Holly Springs, GA. Their bridge is not colorful, but instead looks classy. The proposed bridge for Sandy Springs is "out there" in regards to the looks.

Councilman Paulson stated he likes the trees along the side of the road. The bridge could be more open and translucent with colors that are not so solid and bold.

Mayor Paul stated he likes the Sandy Springs pillars. The City is trying to integrate the river into the City's images.

Councilman Paulson asked if staff can get a drawing of the graphic design of the bridge in order to moderate how intense the color is.

Councilman Sterling stated maybe LED lights can be used instead and the color can be used only at night. Another suggestion is leaving the design transparent, so when driving on the bridge one does not feel "boxed in".

There was a consensus of Council to bring more bridge treatment designs back to Council at a future date.

Public Works

1. Consideration of Preliminary Concept for T-0024 Hammond Drive Improvements

CIP Unit Manager Marty Martin stated this item is to discuss the budget for project T-0024. There is about \$670,000 allocated for this project and \$500,000 of the funds are a congressional earmark from 2008 with an agreement with GDOT. The project is the widening of Hammond Drive and also explored a multilane divided roadway between the City Center and Perimeter area. One of the early discoveries was that because of the age of the neighborhoods along Hammond Drive, an environmental impact study is required. The City decided to not move forward with the study, especially with the developing City Center study. There is still the \$500,000 earmark that can be invested on Hammond Drive. The proposal Council is viewing this evening is a streetscape development between Boylston Drive and Harleston Road on Hammond Drive. The concept drawing and estimate are included in the package. Staff would like to move forward with the proposed concept and the design of the project.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling stated the long term plan was to give this area more queuing capacity towards Roswell Road. His concern is if the \$600,000 is spent, it will limit the ability to expand the area at some point in the future.

CIP Unit Manager Martin stated the cost of widening the road in this area is significantly greater than the budget. In the interest of moving the project along staff will need to seek reprogramming for the funds.

Councilman John Paulson asked if funds can be used for right-of-way acquisition.

CIP Unit Manager Martin responded yes.

City Manager John McDonough stated if it is Council's intent to improve this area in the future, then perhaps the funds being spent on right-of-way acquisition would be in favor of the City. The option can be left open for a widening project in the future.

Councilman Sterling stated the City probably cannot widen Hammond Drive all the way to Dunwoody, since it would be so expensive. The biggest queuing issue is near Roswell Road.

CIP Unit Manager Martin stated staff did explore with traffic staff the installation of a dedicated right turn lane on Boylston. The neighborhoods on both sides of Hammond on the two lane section are fifty years old or older. The EIS study is required by the State preservation office due to the age of the homes.

Councilman Tibby DeJulio asked about extending Boylston to Carpenter Drive. He asked if this money could be used for that type of project.

CIP Unit Manager Martin stated staff looked at any intersection improvements that might be made there. Because there is so much private property on the southern side, there will be significant right-of-way acquisitions. Given the available budget, that is not feasible.

Councilman Paulson stated what if this project is completed and the City then decides to widen Hammond Drive, so this project ends up being removed. He is not sure the City should spend the money on this project.

CIP Unit Manager Martin stated ultimately if Hammond Drive is widened to a multilane divided roadway, this is the obvious area where the transition will take place. The proposed project will extend the streetscape on the southside of Hammond Drive. It will provide an extension of the Roswell Road streetscape down to the hotel property. Between Boylston and Harleston the project will provide a sidewalk that connects to the neighborhoods of Harleston. There is no sidewalk there now.

Councilman DeJulio asked if the funds can be used for sidewalks on Hammond Drive.

CIP Unit Manager Martin responded staff believes so. The funds will pay for sidewalks, street lighting, pedestrian crossing, and retaining walls for the shoulders.

Councilman Ken Dishman asked about the land the City purchased in this area recently and asked if that is close enough to this project to where money can be moved from those funds to assist in this project.

Mayor Paul stated the earmark for this project is federally protected.

Councilman DeJulio stated this earmark was given to the City by Congressman John Lewis with the idea of using it for bus rapid transit for Hammond Drive.

City Manager McDonough stated there was a lot of discussion in the past about \$18 to \$20 million with the City working in partnership with the PCID and the City of Dunwoody to complete this corridor from Dunwoody to Roswell Road.

Councilman DeJulio stated the area to be improved was from Hammond Park to Roswell Road.

Councilman Sterling stated there is only \$73,000 in right-of-way acquisitions for this project. He asked how much that will give the City in terms of depth.

CIP Unit Manager Martin stated it provides enough space for a six foot wide sidewalk, a two foot grass strip, and associated lighting.

Councilman Paulson asked what are the odds that Hammond Drive to Roswell Road will be funded and widened within the next ten years. This discussion includes improving the block rather than not improving it.

Mayor Paul stated the service transportation bill, which funds all federal and state highway projects, has not been able to allocate money to the City within the past few years. There will be no infrastructure money to widen Hammond Drive for quite some time.

Councilman Dishman asked what improvements can be made to Roswell Road.

CIP Unit Manager Martin stated there is one project on Roswell Road located south of the intersection of Roswell and Hammond Drive to Cliftwood, which is streetscape project T-0008. At the corner of Roswell Road and Hammond Drive there are limitations because of the impact of the adjacent property owners. There are hopes that this project will complement the streetscape already in place on Roswell Road north to the City Center.

Councilman Dishman asked if anything can be done immediately adjacent to Roswell Road going east on Hammond Drive.

CIP Unit Manager Martin stated on the southside there is already streetscape in this area. On the northside that area has been looked at east of Roswell Road. Development right now is constrained as to what can be done with the streetscape, to the point the commercial activities would be impacted.

City Manager McDonough stated the only thing that can be done is a right turn lane and that would be cost prohibitive.

Mayor Paul stated there are not enough cars turning right on Boylston going westbound from Hammond Drive.

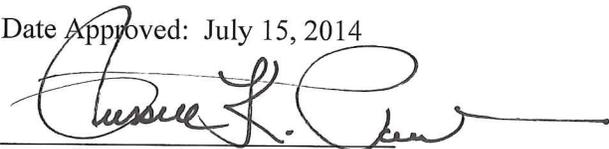
Councilman Sterling stated if a sidewalk is constructed, some of the families in Hammond Hills can walk to City Center.

Mayor Paul stated there is not much flexibility for improvements in this area.

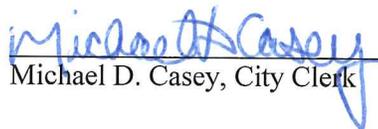
There was a consensus of Council to allow staff to move forward with a preliminary concept for T-0024 Hammond Drive Improvements.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Date Approved: July 15, 2014



Russell K. Paul, Mayor



Michael D. Casey, City Clerk