
Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, May 6, 2014, at 6:36 p.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

Councilmembers present: Councilman John Paulson, Councilman Ken Dishman, Councilman Graham McDonald, Councilman Gabriel Sterling, Councilman Tibby DeJulio, and Councilman Andy Bauman.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Works

1. Update on Cobb Braves Stadium Evaluation and Sandy Springs Projects

Director of Public Works Garrin Coleman gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Cobb Braves Stadium Evaluation and Sandy Springs Projects.

Councilman Graham McDonald asked how the seven Sandy Springs intersections were chosen to study for the Development of Regional Impact (DRI).

Director of Public Works Coleman stated staff member Kristen Wescott attended the meetings. The area of impact was used to judge which intersections to include. If the intersections studied show improvements, then the City is responsible for making those improvements.

Transportation Planner Kristen Wescott stated it is important to realize that part of the application process is doing this analysis to see what the area of impact is.

Mayor Rusty Paul asked for an explanation of why these intersections are included in the DRI.

Transportation Planner Wescott stated the DRI is a very large traffic evaluation. On behalf of the applicant, the consultant has to evaluate the intersections for the existing conditions, before development occurs, in order to have a baseline. If the intersection is currently operating at a level of service C and the development occurs and degrades the intersection to a D or E, then staff will know what impact the development will have.

Mayor Paul asked if the City adds other intersections to the study, would that be a signal to the public that there are plans for improving those intersections for traffic capacity.

Transportation Planner Wescott stated if intersections further from the proposed development indicated a poor level of service, there may be interest in improving those intersections as well. The study will show traffic impacts in Sandy Springs as well as Cobb County.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling asked if these intersections are included in the 36 being discussed.

Transportation Planner Wescott responded yes.

Councilman Sterling stated Sandy Springs contains over 20% of the affected area. A giant development is coming to the area and Sandy Springs gets to pay for the upgrades if the DRI states the City is supposed to. He asked if the City not doing what the DRI says will preclude the City from receiving State and federal funds for those intersections.

Transportation Planner Wescott stated GRITA states in the notice of decision that anything directly affected and needing improvement to accommodate the development has to be paid for by the developer

or the interested parties, such as Cobb County. This is not written in clear terms, but GRTA is saying they would support giving more State or federal funds for improvements that do not have to be completed in the same time frame.

Mayor Paul asked if the developer is required to participate in any of the improvements.

Transportation Planner Wescott stated by completing the traffic analysis there is an opportunity for the City to engage in discussions with the developer and Cobb County.

Councilman John Paulson stated if the development is built and it negatively impacts Sandy Springs, it seems like the developer would have to help fix the problem.

City Manager John McDonough stated it is very unlikely the City will see any outside funding from Cobb County or the developer to Sandy Springs for transportation impacts.

Councilman Andy Bauman asked if there are any opportunities with GDOT.

Assistant City Manager Bryant Poole stated the City will reach out to the stakeholders about the traffic impact. If the stakeholders do not participate in the New Northside Drive and I-285 improvements and traffic backs up onto I-285, then GDOT has an interest to protect I-285.

Councilman Sterling stated there is no parking plan for the development, yet. He assumes the City has parking near the river that the developer may want to use.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated there are opportunities the City can explore, but no guarantees the City will receive assistance in funding.

Councilman McDonald stated his objective is to defend Districts 3 and 6 from overflow Braves traffic and with the increase in traffic from the development he asked if the area of impact area should be expanded.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated from a professional standpoint, staff feels comfortable with the recommendations being made. He does not know what value the City would receive by going outside the area of impact.

Councilman McDonald stated he is confident that Riverside Drive and I-285 will be impacted from the development, but it is not in the green area of impact shown on the map. He is trying to figure out the logic and strategy behind that.

Mayor Paul stated given the current capacity of the road and highway network in that area, if people are running late to the game they will get off on Roswell Road or Riverside Drive and then use the surface streets. The question is how does that process get managed and ensure there is adequate capacity to keep that from happening.

Councilman McDonald stated he is concerned that the City is only monitoring the baseline current traffic level and this is before evaluating impacts from this development in what he thinks will be the impacted area.

Councilman Sterling stated Riverside Drive to Heards Ferry will be a route used to get towards the river.

Councilman Bauman stated the intersection of Mt. Paran and Powers Ferry Road may have issues in the future. There are already issues near the northern exit of Riverview Road.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated he does not want Council to think this is the only analysis that can be done. Staff can add areas of study outside the DRI.

Mayor Paul stated this is just the beginning process of analyzing the impact area. The impact area will expand well beyond the two mile radius of the project.

Director of Public Works Coleman continued with the presentation.

Councilman McDonald stated he has concerns about GDOT's proposed roundabout project at I-285 and Riverside Drive. This exit is immediately outside the impact area. The edge of the DRI could cause complications for the City. When he attended the open house that GDOT held, it was explained that the proposed roundabout project did not take the arrival of the new Braves stadium into account.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated GDOT is pursuing that project as a safety project and not as an operational improvement.

Councilman McDonald stated he is hearing that the impact of the Braves stadium is not known now.

Councilman Bauman stated there may be alternative options besides the roundabout for this area. None of Council has heard exactly why this area is a safety issue. The issue of the Braves impact alone would justify a discussion of alternatives. He supports Councilman McDonald's comments.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated staff has sent all the comments received to GDOT.

Councilman Sterling stated if GDOT takes the Braves stadium into account, they will see that this intersection is more important as a safety improvement, because of the volume that will likely increase during the peak traffic times. The dual roundabout will back up traffic at Heard's Ferry. This project has not been thoroughly thought through. Expanding the road shoulder and reinforcing it while extending it makes more sense.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated that type of project is what staff developed internally and presented to GDOT in the past year. Staff can engage GDOT staff to see if they would be willing to give a presentation to Council.

Councilman Bauman stated the Braves relocation is likely inevitable. The project may provide a unique opportunity for a whole plan for major traffic solutions. Sandy Springs can provide leadership to find a way to create a century long improvement in this area. He wants to use the opportunity to create bold action for this area in a more efficient way.

Councilman Paulson asked that staff request GDOT attend a Council meeting to discuss the proposed project and address the impact of the new Braves stadium, as GDOT sees it, on this intersection.

There was a consensus of Council to have a formal presentation from GDOT on the roundabout project.

Fire Department

1. Review of Sandy Springs Contract Proposal Options from Rural/Metro

City Manager John McDonough called Ken Simpson to the front. Ken Simpson is the Regional General Manager for Rural/Metro. Rural/Metro is the designated provider for the City's zone in Region 3. North Fulton County has been split into two zones. The southern zone is Sandy Springs and the

northern zone is shared by the other four cities. The Sandy Springs contract with Rural/Metro is based on an eight minute response time to a priority one call. The City is currently staffed with three to five ambulances, depending on peak times. He referenced a chart that includes the current North Fulton rates, Sandy Springs current rates, and proposed Sandy Springs rates. Included in the agenda package are five different rate options. The difference in the rates has to do with the amount of subsidy that the City provides. The City currently provides a \$450,000 subsidy and the customers pay the rates shown in the yellow box. Staff wanted to provide Council with a few options that include a rate increase in exchange for a reduction in the subsidy that the overall tax payers of Sandy Springs have to pay. Option 1A has a revenue subsidy of \$405,000 and would save the City \$45,000 a year in exchange for an increase in the Sandy Springs rates. Option 1B includes a revenue subsidy of \$425,000 with a 7% rate increase. Option 3 would be a 68% increase to levels of service and would be an integrated system that would rely on exchanging resources with the rest of North Fulton. The rest of North Fulton's emphasis is on a twelve minute response time instead of eight minutes. Option 4 is a 50% rate increase for a 73% subsidy decrease. This would occur over a period of twelve months. For six months the City would pay \$37,500 a month and then the amount would reduce all the way down to \$10,000 a month in month twelve. The full savings would occur in year two. This plan includes a better response time and lower cost to the actual user compared to the other four North Fulton cities. Sandy Springs will be able to reduce the subsidy from \$450,000 to \$120,000. Option 4 is what staff recommends.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling stated Option 4 includes increasing the cost to the user, who is private insurance, Medicare and Medicaid. The cost would still be lower than the rest of the North Fulton cities and the ambulance response time will be four minutes faster.

City Manager John McDonough responded yes. The service would remain the same with an eight minute response time, reducing the subsidy by \$330,000, and for the citizens who are transported by ambulance in Sandy Springs the cost is less than in the other North Fulton cities.

Councilman Andy Bauman asked if there are any other jurisdictions that have ambulance response times similar to Sandy Springs and how do the rates compare.

Ken Simpson, Regional General Manager for Rural/Metro, stated Grady does not have response times even close to the Sandy Springs eight minutes. The rest of the North Fulton cities have elected for a twelve minute response time, which is also used in south Fulton County.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated Sandy Springs has done a phenomenal job of increasing survival rates as a result of this particular policy. Rather than the cost being spread to all citizens, it becomes more of a user fee instead of a general taxation service.

Councilman Tibby DeJulio stated Medicare and Medicaid have negotiated rates. He asked if the Sandy Springs rates fall within those allowances.

Mr. Simpson stated Medicare can be billed and they will pay whatever amount they want to pay. The Sandy Springs rates will be used by commercial insurers.

Councilman DeJulio asked if commercial insurances only pay a certain percent as well.

Mayor Paul stated it depends on what rates are negotiated with the provider.

Mr. Simpson stated with Medicare a patient cannot be billed any further. With commercial insurance, whatever the insurance pays is what the insurance pays, and the remainder is the patient's responsibly.

Councilman John Paulson stated the principle of this agreement is the City maintaining the ambulance response time, so the level of service is unchanged, and the City will reduce the taxpayer subsidy for the user. The agreed upon amount will be less than what the adjoining neighborhoods are charging.

City Manager McDonough stated Option 4 is a significant cost savings to the City, which is over \$300,000.

Councilman Sterling stated he would like to know the ambulance response times for the City of Atlanta and their rates.

Mr. Dishman stated Grady charges about \$1,650 for transport. Sandy Springs is receiving a much higher level of service compared to anything that Grady offers.

There was a consensus of Council that Option 4 was chosen for the five year contract renewal.

Community Development

1. City Center Street Network Revision

Director of Community Development Angela Parker gave a PowerPoint presentation on the City Center Street Network proposed revision.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling asked if the project attaches to the Cadranel property.

Director of Community Development Parker responded yes. The plan for Allen Road is to reduce the center lane that runs from Cliftwood to Roswell Road.

Councilman Andy Bauman asked if this plan has taken into consideration the discussions that have occurred with the developer of the Allen Road property and the neighbors.

Director of Community Development Parker responded yes. Staff met with the Cadranel property owner as well Wieland and staff is still working with them. She believes both parties will be comfortable with these changes.

Councilman Sterling asked what was at this location before and what is it being changed to.

Director of Community Development Parker stated initially this area called for a two lane street with parking.

Councilman Sterling stated originally there were two lanes with parking and now staff is looking at one lane with parking being at this location.

Director of Community Development Parker stated staff is looking at a multi-use path on the south side of Allen Road and then two lanes with parking on the north side of Allen Road. For some reason the Master Plan ended the multi-use path at Cliftwood. Staff would like to get a path from Cliftwood extending down to the park.

Councilman Graham McDonald stated he has constituents who live off Lake Forrest that have expressed concerns related to the parking on Allen Road. He asked if 80% of the road closest to Lake Forrest and the stretch of Allen Road between Sandy Springs Circle will have no parking.

Director of Community Development Parker responded yes. The section where the parking will be on Allen Road to the west of Sandy Springs Circle will be very close to the intersection of Sandy Springs Circle. There is approximately 100 feet between Sandy Springs Circle and the stream buffer. The parking will not extend west of the stream buffer.

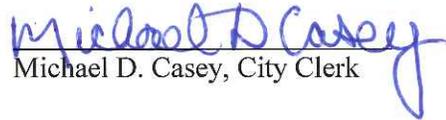
There was a consensus of Council to allow the City Center street network revision.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Date Approved: May 20, 2014



Russell K. Paul, Mayor



Michael D. Casey, City Clerk