

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, March 1, 2011, at 7:33 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Community Development

1. Approve 2011 Draft CDBG Action Plan for 30-day Comment Period

Community Development Block Grant Manager Vann McNeill stated this item is to submit a draft action plan to HUD, to ensure the City receives funds in July. Consistent with the five year plan, the 2011 funds will be set aside to complete Phase II.

Mayor Eva Galambos called for public comments in support of or opposition to this application. There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Galambos asked if there is information as to what will be done with the CDBG funds for the ensuing years.

Community Development Block Grant Manager McNeill stated what has been recommended by the administration is a 7.5% reduction for the program. The Continuing Resolution adopted by the House proposed to reduce the program by sixty percent.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnery asked if this would impact the City's five-year forward funding that has been received for this project.

Community Development Block Grant Manager McNeill stated it is unclear how it will affect FY2011 and FY2012. It will depend on the debate that is about to begin over the budget.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked if the City has the ability to estimate five years in advance and receive the money in a lump sum. The City did this a couple years ago. If the City is two years into the project and there are three years of future funding left, is the sixty percent reduction going to reduce the funds the City was planning on receiving?

Community Development Block Grant Manager McNeill stated Council approved the 108 loan application and that was submitted to HUD. In the meantime, staff needed more data from the surveying contract to nail down a good budget. HUD has held the application in pending status since that time. In the meantime, the project has continued to expand. The Hightower sidewalk was added on the northside and a few issues have come up with the permitting process, so it has taken a bit longer. The City has received two more years of funding. There is enough money to work on Phase I. The City has not moved forward with the five-year borrowing plan, but it is there as an option if the City needs to borrow for the next phase in 2011 or 2012.

Mayor Galambos asked if HUD has an obligation to give the City five years.

Community Development Block Grant Manager McNeill responded no.

Councilmember Dianne Fries asked if the City has enough money to complete Phase I.

Community Development Block Grant Manager McNeill responded yes.

Councilmember Fries asked where Phase II is located.

Community Development Block Grant Manager McNeill stated Phase II is from Northridge Road to the Chattahoochee River. Phase I is from Dalrymple to Northridge Road and to Hightower Trail.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny asked if there is a Phase III for Northridge Road.

Community Development Block Grant Manager McNeill stated the project has not progressed that far.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with this item.

Public Works

1. Consideration of Approval of a Contract Modification to Construct Peachtree-Dunwoody Road at Spalding Intersection Improvement Project (T-0026)

Capital Program Director Marty Martin stated project T-0026 is the Peachtree Dunwoody Road at Spalding Drive intersection improvement. This project will widen sections of both roads at the intersection. It will provide dedicated turning lanes. The original contract of nearly \$700,000 was awarded to JJE Construction. It was recently discovered there are unsuitable materials on sight. A lab tested the unsuitable and wet material and gave staff recommendations on how to remedy the problem. There is a cost estimate of \$106,000 for the unsuitable materials and an additional \$21,000 for an existing water distribution line that is too shallow within this widened section. The line will need to be lowered to be out of the base material of the roadway, so the line is not destroyed during the construction. This agenda item is to ask for the over ten percent of contract cost approval for this change order to pursue this work. Included in the change order the consultant recommended a phased approach to deal with this issue. Staff is asking approval from Council for the whole amount of \$106,000. If the whole amount is not needed, it will not be used. Staff believes a \$35,000-\$40,000 fix should correct the problem. If not, a more aggressive approach of undercutting and adding stone will be required to render a more suitable section and provide a stable base for pavement through that area. This is the approach that staff is offering Council for managing through this active construction project.

Councilmember John Paulson asked Capital Program Director Martin if he is in agreement with the reports.

Capital Program Director Martin responded yes. This is a step down in cost from the first rough order of magnitude cost that the contractor gave staff. The contractor originally told staff a lot of excavating and placing more rock back in place would be needed at double the cost of this change order before Council tonight.

Mayor Eva Galambos asked if the discovery of the unsuitable material could have been foreseen.

Capital Program Director Martin stated the pavement was in good condition. Throughout early parts of the design there was not anything that indicated pavement failure in the area.

Mayor Galambos asked if the water line needs to be moved because of the unsuitable material.

Capital Program Director Martin stated it is not related to the material, but related to the widening of the road section.

Mayor Galambos asked if moving the water line could have been foreseen.

Capital Program Director Martin stated after staff coordinated with the utility company, they knew approximately where the line was laterally. However, the line was not as deep as staff believed it was going to be. The water line needs to be below the base course for the roadway.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio asked if staff is running into problems where the lines are not as deep as they should be in other areas, too. Will this be a common problem throughout Sandy Springs?

Public Works Director Tom Black stated it is. The water line was fine in one area of the project at a minimum of 4 feet deep, but was discovered to be 2 feet deep within the area to be widened. Staff had no choice but to request the water line be lowered. There was also an underground spring that was discovered in the area outside the road. The only reason the spring did not tear up the road is because it found its way to an old storm drain running underneath the road.

Councilmember Paulson asked if that storm drain was repaired.

Public Works Director Black responded yes. Now the unsuitable soil will be removed, fabric will be placed down and then stone placed on top of the fabric.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated at Northridge and Dunwoody Place there are issues with the depth of the water, gas, and phone lines.

Mayor Galambos asked if the total amount is still under budget.

Capital Program Director Martin stated it is still within budget. Staff tried to minimize the impact on the budget before the change order was brought to Council.

Councilmember Fries asked when a change order is coming in under budget, does staff still need to bring the change before Council.

Mayor Galambos stated Council previously approved a contract amount and the change order is something different that needs to be approved.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with this item.

2. Consider Letter of Support for the Roundabouts at the Ramps of Riverside Drive and I-285

Transportation Planning Division Manager Garrin Coleman stated this item is for consideration for the City Manager to sign a letter of support for GDOT to pursue a roundabout configuration at Riverside Drive off of I-285. This project was presented to staff about a week and a half ago after one of the project meetings at GDOT. Staff submitted a similar permit for the westbound ramps to coordinate signals in that area. GDOT delayed approving that permit, but approached staff and stated they think it would be a premier location to have an interchange roundabout configuration. GDOT evaluated over twenty sites across the State of Georgia. This location is one of their preferred locations. GDOT's plan is to obtain a letter of support from the City to agree to fund any additional street lights at the interchange as well fund any landscape maintenance that would be put in as a gateway feature. GDOT considers this a good transportation solution and could dress this area up to make it a gateway into the community. GDOT believes the work can be done without additional right-of-way. Once GDOT receives the support letter from the City, they will go forward with engaging a consultant, developing concept plans, and then going back out to the public. This project would be run by GDOT. Depending on the response of the public,

GDOT would like to move forward with a federally funded project. It would take approximately two years to reach the construction phase. It would take probably twenty-eight to thirty-six months to complete. GDOT has indicated that the City can install the signal at this location as an interim project.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated she and Public Works Director Tom Black spoke to a few individuals at the meeting this evening who are from neighborhood associations. One citizen asked why they just found out about this project. This item was only recently presented to staff. GDOT owns this land and they can do what they want with it, as long as it improves safety and operations. With the letter of support, the City agrees to pay for the lights and the maintenance. GDOT will be seeking public opinion on this. If this does not work, GDOT will not spend the money. If no private right-of-way is needed, it seems worth exploring.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated GDOT is pursuing traffic and safety improvement money for this project.

Mayor Eva Galambos stated she is disappointed with the landscaping GDOT did at Northridge Road. She would like the City Arborist to have input on this.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated the City Arborist did have input at Northridge.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated the City Arborist came forward with a modified plan. GDOT told staff they could not build the modified plan, because the plants were not native species.

Councilmember Fries stated after the plan was first shown to her, it was changed a little and GDOT told staff no. She would like the landscaping to mirror what PCID is doing just an exit down.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated GDOT should have contractors remove the dead shrubs.

Councilmember Fries stated when the contractor planted the shrubs, material should have been placed down to help with the weeds.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated if PCID can have interchange landscaping approved, then the City should be able to do the same.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated PCID pays the contractor to maintain the landscaping. GDOT's money was not used for that.

Councilmember Fries stated the issue is not the maintaining, but what was allowed to be planted, and the City was not able to receive the same type of plants.

Director of Public Works Tom Black stated there was a budget constraint of \$50,000 total for the plantings and design work. Perimeter CID paid for what they had planted.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio asked about the projected cost of the lights and the maintenance on a yearly basis.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated the current estimate from Georgia Power is around \$30-\$50 a month for lights. It depends on the wattage and size of the lights. He envisions ten to fifteen lights maximum would be needed in this area.

Director of Public Works Black stated until we get to the design stage, we will not know.

Mayor Galambos stated this might be a way for the community to get involved, if they do not agree with the landscaping from GDOT.

Councilmember John Paulson asked if GDOT will keep staff informed of this project as it progresses.

Director of Public Works Black responded yes.

Mayor Galambos asked if this item will go on the consent agenda for the next City Council Meeting.

Councilmember Meizen McEnery stated the public may want to give their opinions on this item.

Mayor Galambos stated there are no public hearings in Work Sessions.

Councilmember Meizen McEnery stated rather than putting this item on the consent agenda, we may want to put it on the regular agenda for a public hearing.

Councilmember DeJulio stated the public will have a chance to voice their opinion to GDOT as this project progresses. There is not much to weigh in on at this point.

Councilmember Meizen McEnery stated this project came up just ten days ago. She does not think it would harm anything to allow residents to voice their opinion.

Mayor Galambos stated the public input from the community should be with GDOT once this project gets going.

Councilmember Meizen McEnery stated this item should not be placed on the consent agenda.

Mayor Galambos asked if there is a consensus on whether or not it should go on the consent agenda.

Councilmember DeJulio stated he thinks it should go on the consent agenda.

Councilmember Paulson stated this letter of support is fine and Council should support the project.

Mayor Galambos stated we do not have a consensus to place it on the consent agenda, but there is consensus to place it on the regular agenda.

Councilmember Meizen McEnery stated the Mayor was asking if the item should go on the consent agenda in two weeks, which would not allow the public comment on the item.

City Manager John McDonough stated this item does not require Council action. This is a consensus issue. Either the Council supports the item or they do not. If Council instructs him to sign the letter of support, then there is a consensus to move forward with the item.

Councilmember Meizen McEnery stated there is a perception in this community that the public has not been adequately informed on this item. The reason for that is because the Public Works Department just found out about this project. She respectfully suggested that Council place it on the agenda in two weeks and allow the public to comment on it.

Councilmember DeJulio asked what the public will comment on.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated Council will listen to what the public has to say. For many of the public that are not at the meeting tonight, the meeting in two weeks will allow them to hear about the item and give comments.

Mayor Galambos stated the only decision the City faces at this point is whether to be cooperative with a GDOT funded project that the City has nothing to do with. GDOT will continue with the project regardless of what the City has to say.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated the Mayor is correct. We just need to inform the public about this item. She asked if it is the wish of Council to place this item on the consent agenda.

Mayor Galambos responded yes.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated she is against this item being on the consent agenda.

Mayor Galambos stated she has determined what the consensus of Council is.

Councilmember Fries stated let's be clear and she asked if Councilmember Paulson wants this item on the consent agenda.

Councilmember Paulson stated it should go on the consent agenda.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with this item.

3. HB277 Transportation Sales Tax Initial Project List for Fulton County Mayors Group Submittal

Transportation Planning Division Manager Garrin Coleman stated this item is a preliminary project list for House Bill 277, which is the regional transportation sales tax. The voting will be held in November of 2012. Currently, the region is gathering projects to be considered by the executive committee, which would then forward them to the Transportation Planning Director at GDOT. The Atlanta Regional Roundtable Executive Committee consists of five members. The members are various Mayors and a couple of County Commissioners. There will also be three nonvoting legislators selected by the chairs of the House and Senate transportation committees.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnery asked how the round table members were selected.

Mayor Eva Galambos stated the Mayors of all the municipalities met and elected Ralph Moore.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked about the County Commissioners.

Mayor Galambos stated they are members by virtue of being the Chairman of the County Commission.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked about the Fulton County and Gwinnett County Commissioners.

Mayor Galambos stated each of the County Commissioners are members of the roundtable.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman responded correct. The county chair from each of the ten counties in the metropolitan region is on the overall committee, as well as the Mayor of Atlanta. There will be a Mayor representing each county as well.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked about the roundtable members.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated the executive committee was selected by the roundtable committee. The executive committee will be reviewing the project list and making recommendations to the State Transportation Planning Director. The projects will be measured by extensive public feedback of the Atlanta region, which includes polling and public forums. The projects must be delivered within the time frame of the sales tax, which is ten years. The projects must be regional in nature. The projects must be contained within an approved transportation or regional plan or within the regional transportation plan of ARC and GDOT. There will also be a benefit cost analysis done by the Transportation Planning Director. Transportation funding goes directly to the City and the counties. Not all the money in the TSPLIT will go to the GDOT for the project construction. There will be a fifteen percent off the top money set aside. That funding allocation is decided the same way LARP was done, by lane mileage and percentage of population. The City's allotment will be around \$1.7-\$1.8 million a year. Over the ten year period, the regional sales tax is expected to bring in \$680 million - \$1 billion a year for projects. GDOT stated they would choose the projects for the roadway capital, and roadway and bridge maintenance, which will be State routes and interstates.

Councilmember John Paulson asked if the Roswell Road bridge would be excluded.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated the project will be let in April.

Mayor Galambos stated the Roswell Road bridge project will be complete before GDOT chooses the projects for the roadway and bridge maintenance.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated there is a Safety and Traffic Operations section as well as Freight and Logistics, Aviation, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Transit Capital, and Transit Operations and Maintenance.

Councilmember Dianne Fries asked if there is a difference between the blue and the red writing on the document.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated the blue are funding categories where the City has projects staff thinks meet the overall criteria of the House Bill. Staff is asking Council to view this list and direct staff how to proceed. Based on the preliminary estimates, the amount will be around \$1.5-\$3.7 billion in the roadway capital funding category. Of the roadway capital preliminary projects staff selected, one of the first is Hammond Drive. The widening projects usually include sidewalks and bike lanes as well. The sources for Hammond Drive would be Local Master Transportation Plan (MTP) and the North Fulton CTP. The next project is collector/distributor lanes on GA 400, between Spalding and I-285. The Sandy Spring Circle Extension is an overpass over I-285 and the source is Revive I-285. The current alternatives identified as 6A and 6B envision an interchange at this location.

Councilmember Fries asked if the Sandy Springs Circle extension is the first section.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman responded yes. It would be from Sandy Springs Circle to Northwood Drive.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked if GDOT has an interchange planned.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman responded yes. Currently there is revive I-285 which is up for public display. Alternatives 6A and 6B are two of the three alternatives GDOT is

pursuing. Both 6A and 6B have an interchange. One is a non-managed lane and the other is a managed lane in the interchange. There is a bridge or underpass at that structure.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated it comes off I-285 at Lake Forrest Drive and drops down to Northwood Drive and Allen Drive.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated alternatives 6A and 6B show a transit station along Northwood Drive right now. Other roadway capital projects are Peachtree Dunwoody Road, which includes sidewalks and bike lanes, and uniform four-lane sections from Abernathy to Spalding. The source for this project is from the local master transportation plan. There is also the Boylston Extension, which would extend Boylston from Hammond Drive to Carpenter Drive, and the source is the local master transportation plan. The third project on that list is the Glenridge Drive widening, which is one block from High Point Road to Royervista Drive.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked about the concept of a pair, so there is another road that will go under or over I-285 on the east side of Roswell Road, around Northwood Drive, and connect to Boylston.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated that would be the Boylston extension.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated since the City is trying to get Sandy Springs Circle to come over onto Northwood, a good circulation would be to go east of Northwood Drive or Lake Placid across Roswell Road and then over or under I-285 and connect to Carpenter Drive to get to Boylston. There would be Sandy Springs Circle crossing and another adjunct to Roswell Road.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated there is a plan staff has seen on old mylars that was done in the mid 1980's called the Sandy Springs loop. It envisioned what Councilmember Meinzen McEnery is referring to.

Mayor Galambos stated she has been attending the meetings of the Fulton County Mayors. Todd Long, the Chief Planner for the State of Georgia, will cut the list and send it back to the roundtable. Mr. Long has made it clear the projects need to be regional improvements. The projects also have to be on an ARC plan. The chances of Mr. Long approving them, if they are not on the list, is practically zero. For some of the other improvements, the City will receive fifteen percent a year, which takes the place of LARP. In addition to the LARP replacement money, our \$1.5 million could be used for some of the smaller improvements. The Fulton County roundtable is waiting for the City's list.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated the next funding area looked at was safety and traffic operations. For Glenridge Road and Roswell Road at State Route 9, the intersection improvement could improve the skew, as well as improvements to Spalding Drive. This project would add a northbound right-turn lane along Winters Chapel Road and add one westbound travel lane becoming a left-turn only lane along Spalding. This would include a wider rehabilitated bridge over Crooked Creek. For traffic operations, Phase II would include Cliftwood and Carpenter intersection improvements. The project would align Cliftwood Drive and Carpenter Drive. For traffic operations, staff looked at ATMS along Roswell Road /State Route 9. There has been success at improving the travel time through that corridor. Staff would like to extend the current ATMS project from Abernathy Road south to the City of Atlanta. Another project would be to extend the future phase of the fiber network. For the bicycle and pedestrian projects, the Morgan Falls power easement was looked at. This project was in the North Fulton CTP. Also reviewed was the T-0019 Roswell Road Streetscapes, which would be from the city limits north to I-285.

Mayor Galambos stated she thinks the City of Dunwoody is not going along with a power easement multi-use trail.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated the other side is Cobb County. This is a project that was an approved plan under regional consideration. Staff wanted to make sure it was brought before Council, but it can be removed from the list.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio asked if the park service supported this project.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated the park service is engaged in a preliminary environmental study on the bridge.

Councilmember DeJulio stated the City should keep this project on the list.

Mayor Galambos stated the phrase "into the City of Dunwoody" needs to be removed.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman responded that can be removed.

Mayor Galambos stated "from Cobb County" can also be removed. It should state "from the Chattahoochee River". The City does not know what Cobb County will do.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated it will not show regional.

Mayor Galambos stated we know that Dunwoody is saying no to this project.

Councilmember Fries stated Cobb County is probably more in favor of this, because they have a bike trail that runs through the County.

Mayor Galambos stated there has been a lot of opposition. She asked if Commissioner Lee represented that area before he became chairman.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated he believes that is correct.

Councilmember Paulson asked if the City of Dunwoody and Cobb County are not interested in this, is Sandy Springs?

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated this could potentially fund the second and third phases of the extension along Morgan Falls Road as well. The last two projects under bicycle and pedestrian are the Lake Forrest bike lanes and sidewalks as well as the High Point bike lanes and sidewalks. These are projects that are north south alternatives to Roswell Road. Both of these projects were included in the Roswell Road LCI study.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery responded that project is not funded, yet.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman responded, correct. There has been discussion of a bus rapid transit infrastructure. The route could run up Roswell Road and out Hammond Drive.

Councilmember Fries asked who is working on a proposal to implement mass transit from Kennesaw to Sandy Springs, across, and then up to Alpharetta.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated he thinks the North Fulton CID has commissioned that study.

Mayor Galambos stated North Fulton residents would like to have a transit extension from the North Springs Station up to Alpharetta.

Councilmember Fries stated their plan is to have a transit that runs east west through Sandy Springs and then up to Kennesaw.

Mayor Galambos stated there is a debate on whether it should be a rail system that connects Cumberland to "spaghetti junction" or whether it should be a bus rapid transit. Council favors the bus rapid transit, because it gives the bus a chance to stop on Roswell Road and bring people into the downtown area.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated staff thought with the vision of a transit station at Northwood Drive at some point, and with the interchange, this transit plan would tie in well with the Hammond project.

Mayor Galambos stated we want to keep people looking at this bus rapid transit. There are constituents that want the rail system, but it would not help downtown Sandy Springs.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked where the rail would go. Would the rail be placed on top of I-285?

Councilmember DeJulio stated the rail system is very expensive.

Councilmember Paulson stated there have been a lot of discussions about the widening of the bridge over GA400 at Northridge.

Mayor Galambos stated the City has the money for that. It does need to be placed on this list.

Transportation Planning Division Manager Coleman stated staff met with GDOT on Monday morning at 8:00 a.m. and they stated the \$7 million is still in place.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked what bridge they are referring to.

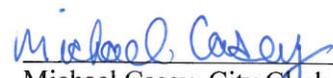
Councilmember Fries stated this is the reconstruction of the Northridge interchange at GA400. GDOT worked on this interchange a few years ago, but that made it worse. They did the work without widening the bridge.

Mayor Galambos stated that money for the Northridge Road bridge project is being funded from the GA400 tollway revenue.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Date Approved: March 15, 2011


Eva Galambos, Mayor


Michael Casey, City Clerk