

**Special Called Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, April 30, 2013, at 6:30 p.m., Mayor pro tempore Tibby DeJulio presiding.**

The meeting began at 7:40 p.m.

**Councilmembers in attendance**

**Mayor:** Mayor Eva Galambos was absent.

**Councilmembers:** Councilmember John Paulson, Councilmember Dianne Fries, Councilmember Gabriel Sterling, Councilmember Tibby DeJulio, and Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnery present.

**1. Presentation by Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) on Revive 285 Options**

**Timothy Preece, Planning Department Manager with Arcadis, gave the following presentation.**



**Project Briefing**

April 2013

## Why revive 285 top end?



- Over 200,000 vehicles move through the corridor daily (14% are trucks)
- Ranks in the top 5 in ARC's Congestion Management System
- Approximately 3000 crashes per year



## Where is the Project Area?

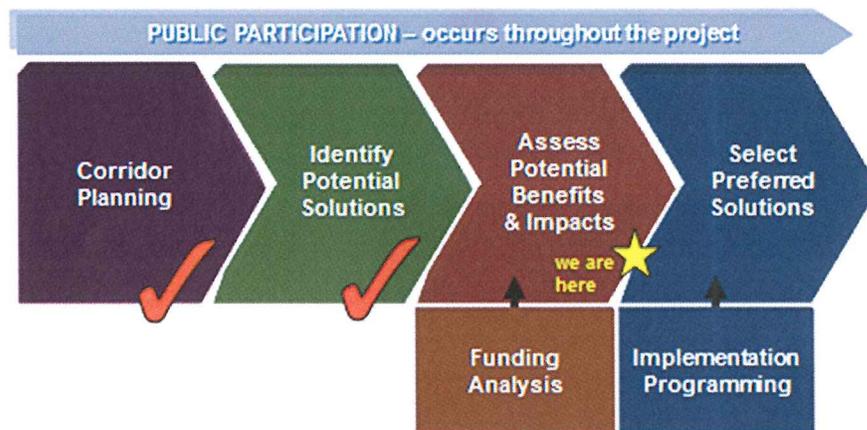


## What are the purposes of revive285 top end?



- Better manage and improve traffic congestion
- Improve mobility options for the traveling public
- Maintain and improve system linkages
- Provide safer travel conditions on the corridor

## Project Process



**Councilmember Gabriel Sterling** asked if there is any point in going through the project process when the financing piece has not been decided.

Mr. Preece responded yes.

## Alternatives Evaluated



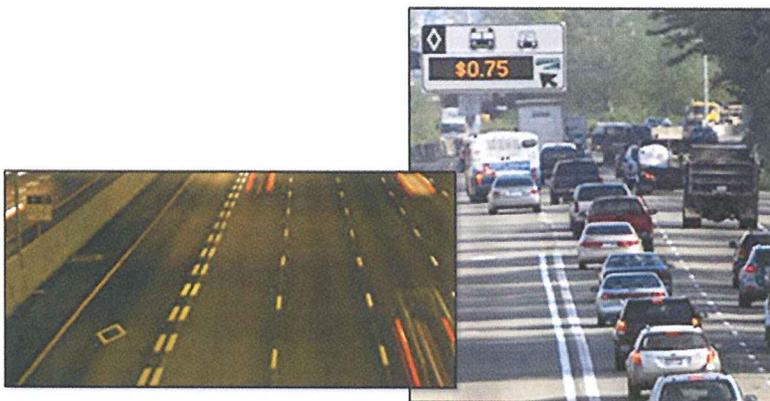
**Operational Improvements** – interchange and ramp modifications to improve traffic and safety



## Alternatives Evaluated



**Managed Lanes** – access is managed based on vehicle occupancy, classification, and/or tolls



## Alternatives Evaluated



**Express Bus**— serves commute trips over relatively long distances (i.e. not same as local bus service).



## Alternatives Evaluated



**Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**— employs features such as dedicated lanes to provide rail-like service at lower cost



## Alternatives Evaluated



**Light Rail Transit (LRT)**—trains that can be located on a street (low-speed) or separate from traffic (high speed) using a single train



## Alternatives Evaluated



1. No Build
2. TSM
3. BRT and Operational Improvements
4. Express Bus and Operational Improvements
5. BRT, Operational Improvements and Managed Lanes
6. Express Bus, Operational Improvements and Managed Lanes
7. LRT and Operational Improvements
8. LRT, Operational Improvements and Managed Lanes

## Alternatives Evaluated



1. **No Build**
2. TSM
3. BRT and Operational Improvements
4. **Express Bus and Operational Improvements**
5. BRT, Operational Improvements and Managed Lanes
6. **Express Bus, Operational Improvements and Managed Lanes**
7. LRT and Operational Improvements
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## What alternatives are advancing?



1. - No Build
4. - Express Bus and Operational Improvements
- 6a. - Express Bus + Managed Lanes + Operational Improvements + Future Transit Right-of-Way
- 6b. - Express Bus + Managed Lanes + General Purpose Lane Re-designation + Operational Improvements + Future Transit Right-of-Way



Alternative 4



Alternative 6a



Alternative 6b

## Alt. 4 - Express Bus + Operational Improvements



## Alt. 6a - Express Bus + Managed Lanes + Operational Improvements + Future Transit



**Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny** stated this plan will require homes and property to be acquired at Riverside Drive.

Mr. Preece stated some homes or properties will have to be acquired. The outside lanes will be slightly elevated.

## Alt. 6b - Express Bus + Managed Lanes/General Purpose Lane Re-designation + Operational Improvements + Future Transit



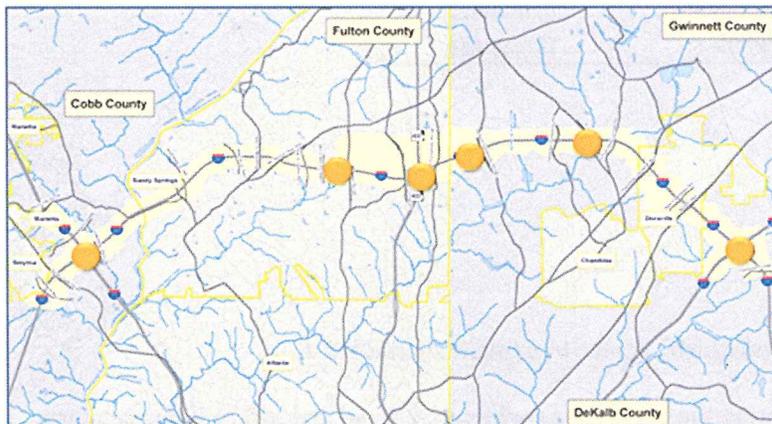
Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked if this alternative plan would be located in this area of I-285 or on the southside. Will the green area indicated on this drawing and on 6a be on the southside of I-285?

Mr. Preece replied it depends. In some places the green area is on the southside and some places it is on the northside.

Councilmember Sterling stated he believes there is a new policy that does not allow existing lanes to be converted into managed lanes.

Mr. Preece stated Councilmember Sterling is correct. This plan was drawn and tested before the new policy was created.

## Managed Lanes Entry/Exit



Managed Lanes Entry/Exit Point- Alt 6A and 6B

## Total Capital Costs for the Build Alternatives



Scenario	Total Capital Costs (in 2009 Dollars)
Alternative 4	\$1.1 Billion
Alternative 6A	\$2.84 Billion
Alternative 6B	\$2.75 Billion

## Travel Time Savings



Scenario	2040 PM Travel Times from I-75 to I-85 along I-285 top end	
	General Purpose Lanes	Managed Lanes
Existing	25 minutes	--
No-Build	26 minutes	--
Alternative 4	17 minutes	--
Alternative 6A	15 minutes	13 minutes
Alternative 6B	25 minutes	13 minutes

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked Mr. Preece to explain alternative 4.

Mr. Preece stated alternative 4 is updating the interchange with operational and safety improvements.

## Person Throughput on I-285



Scenario	Person Throughput (Per Day) Year 2040	% Change Over No-Build
No-Build	431,726	--
Alternative 4	463,572	+7%
Alternative 6A	565,578	+31%
Alternative 6B	528,601	+22%

Councilmember DeJulio asked if a bus that drives through the interchange counts as one person or forty.

**Assistant City Manager Bryant Poole** stated the count depends on how many people are in that vehicle.

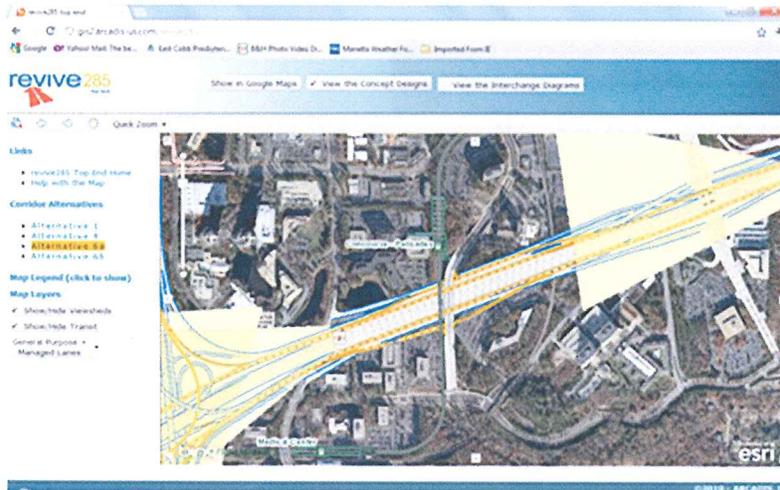
Councilmember Sterling asked if other jurisdictions that use the managed lanes have seen an increase in the person throughout number.

**Mr. Preece** responded it depends on how the lane is managed.

Councilmember Sterling asked if the collector-distributor lanes would go from Roswell Road to GA400.

**Frank Danchetz, Vice President, Business Practice Director with Arcadis**, responded yes. One lane begins west of Roswell Road and there is a collector-distributor lane that begins east of Ashford Dunwoody, goes to the interchange, and goes past Roswell Road. This lane is near Riverside Drive. There is a lot of weaving of traffic in this area. The other problem is there are trips where people are not intending to get off anywhere in the corridor, but instead want to go through the corridor. The third issue is that the community has gotten used to using I-285 as the main street.

## Interactive Mapping Tool



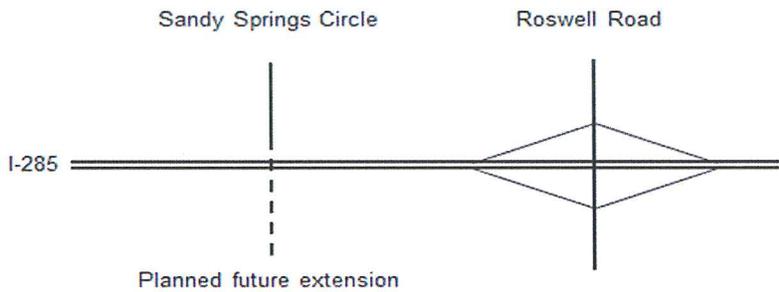
Councilmember DeJulio asked if either alternative 4 or 6a were chosen, how long would it take to design and construct the plan from start to finish.

Mr. Danchetz stated there has to be approval on the National Environmental Policy Act Document (EIS), a Record of Decision, and the permitting process. The permits will take about a year to acquire.

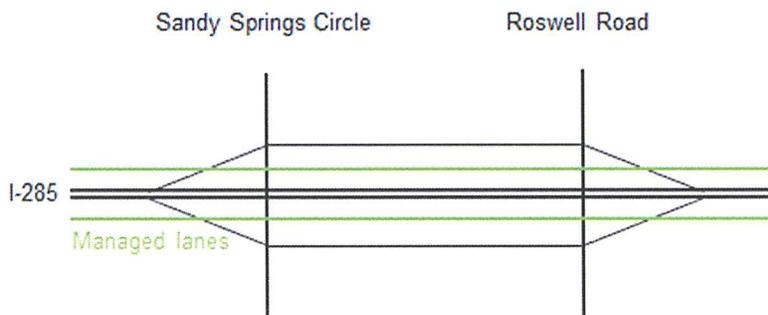
Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked if the collector-distributor lane has been through the EIS process.

Mr. Danchetz responded no. The lanes Councilmember Meinzen McEnery are referring to are the lanes on GA400. There is a collector-distributor system at Abernathy Road that is located south of Northside Drive extending to Hammond Drive. That collector-distributor lane has a finding with no significant impact on the environmental assessment. GDOT has been cleared to buy the right-of-way and to construct, both of which have been done.

### Sandy Springs Circle, existing



### Sandy Springs Circle, design options



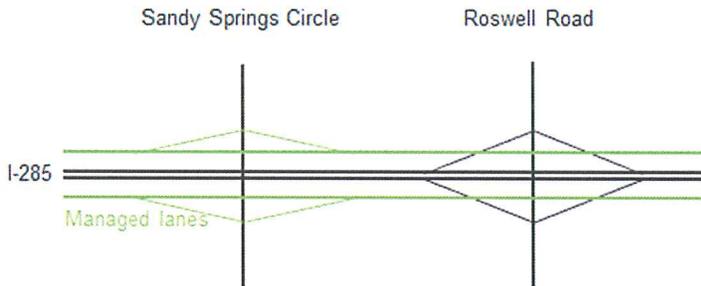
Councilmember DeJulio asked if the proposed lanes would be on City streets.

Mr. Preece responded no.

Mr. Danchetz stated the proposed lanes would be part of the interstate system.

Councilmember Sterling stated there may be a problem with traffic unloading onto Sandy Springs Circle.

## Sandy Springs Circle, design options



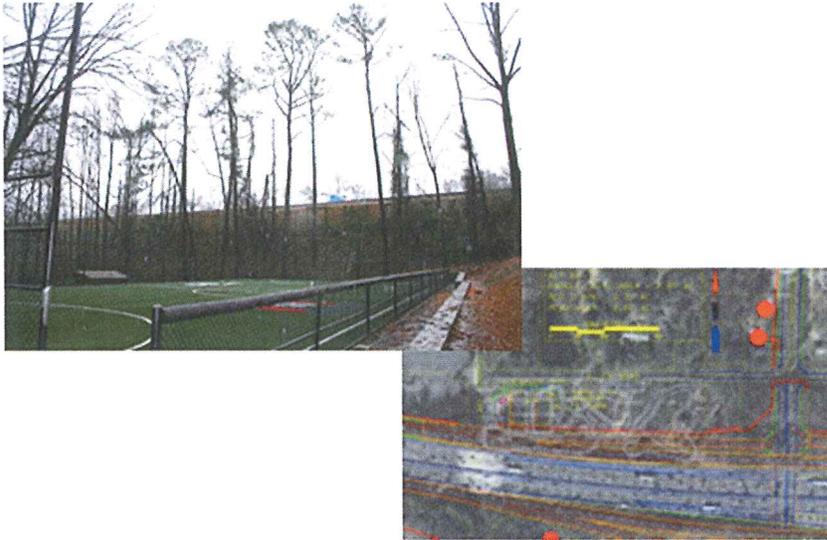
Mr. Preece stated if this design is built, about 1,000 cars would exit the managed lane at Sandy Springs Circle. There is not another managed lane access point until a car reaches Perimeter Center Parkway.

Councilmember Sterling stated Sandy Springs is already a cut-through for Cobb County commuters. This proposed plan would unload these commuters onto Sandy Springs Circle in order to get to Johnson Ferry Road and to Abernathy Road. The City will be spending around \$100 million near Sandy Springs Circle by narrowing the road and making it more walkable. This proposed plan would route more than 1,000 cars to Sandy Springs Circle in the morning.

**Councilmember Dianne Fries** stated since Roswell Road has been widened traffic is better. The issue is when the cars exit I-285.

Councilmember Meizen McEnery stated she would like to discuss moving the managed lane onto Riverside Drive.

## Allen Park



Councilmember Sterling asked what would happen if the City does not agree with moving the ball fields in Allen Park.

**Marlo Clowers, Project Manager with GDOT**, stated GDOT is in the middle of an environmental process and if the City does not agree to the plan, the process will be delayed.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated currently there are issues with people using the tunnel and going under I-285. She is worried about security issues near the proposed managed lanes.

Mr. Preece stated there will be a barrier wall located in this area.

Councilmember Sterling left the meeting at this time.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked what will happen near Northwoods.

Mr. Danchetz stated there will be managed lanes on the south side that will be elevated.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked if all the property between I-285 and Northwoods will be acquired.

Mr. Danchetz responded no.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated Northwoods has unlimited density in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The City envisions this area to have Class A office use and hotels.

Mr. Danchetz stated the proposed plan is to have managed lane access onto Sandy Springs Circle. There are managed lanes going onto Northwoods, but there will be no access.

## Next Steps



1. Finalize the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (2013)
2. Conduct public hearing and official agency comment period (2014)
3. Complete final EIS and seek Record of Decision (2014-2015)



Councilmember DeJulio asked if once the Record of Decision is approved, the plans will be finalized.

Mr. Danchetz responded no.

Councilmember DeJulio asked if the soonest the Record of Decision will be approved is 2015.

Mr. Danchetz responded yes. The Record of Decision may be delayed if the draft is not completed in a timely manner. The reason for this presentation is to ask the City to approve GDOT making the changes to Allen Park sometime in the future. The solution will allow Allen Park to continue to function and allow GDOT to accept the solution of changing Allen Park.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked if Council would be approving alternative 6a if they agree to the letter the City Manager drafted.

Mr. Danchetz responded no.

Councilmember DeJulio stated the agreement would be Council allowing GDOT to change Allen Park.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated she is pleased this plan does not include adding managed lanes to Mount Vernon Highway and Riverside Drive. The City has a major town center project planned for downtown Sandy Springs. She feels that the managed lanes could interfere with the City's ability to provide a quality mixed use downtown area. She asked about a managed lane at Roswell Road.

Ms. Clowers stated there is already a general purpose lane at this location. GDOT has a policy of not mixing the two different lanes in the same area.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated recently GDOT added a lane over the interstate to provide six lanes. The citizens suffered from 1968 until about one year ago with a general purpose interchange while other intersections over I-285 have been updated two to three times. The six lane interchange is the major

entrypoint to Sandy Springs. She asked if GDOT can place the managed lanes to connect to the Roswell Road interchange and not Sandy Springs Circle.

Mr. Danchetz stated ARCADIS has worked with the City to come up the best answer for this project and they are open to working with the City to decide the best answer. No final decision has been made regarding this plan. The decision could be to not place a managed lane at this location and there not be a managed lane access to Sandy Springs.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated she is not in complete agreement with the underground tunnel, which is not as important as protecting the town center.

Assistant City Manager Poole stated even if the managed lane is not connected to Sandy Springs Circle, the managed lane will still impact Allen Park. Council still needs to give GDOT a decision regarding Allen Park. The public can still decide on an alternative option for the managed lane. The letter does not change the ability for the City to state they do not want the managed lane.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated people have discussed adding an east bound road that would connect near the Lowe's or Barfield Road and go under I-285. This could be the area where the managed lanes connect. Instead of ruining the Sandy Springs walkable roads, all should consider constructing a road under I-285 at Bolyston.

Councilmember Fries stated she does not like the plan that includes cars exiting onto Sandy Springs Circle. The drivers will cut through Sandy Springs to Johnson Ferry and drive through the City's downtown.

Councilmember DeJulio asked once the Record of Decision is approved, how long will it take to implement the plan.

Mr. Danchetz stated if the money is not available to complete the plan all at once, the plan would be spread out over the next fifteen to twenty years. The region is required to have a twenty year regional transportation plan and a four year project implementation plan. For the next twenty years this project is on the list and money will be set aside for this project.

**Councilmember John Paulson** stated he does not mind the managed lane plan. He objects to the lanes connecting to Sandy Springs Circle.

There was a consensus of Council objecting to the managed lanes connecting to Sandy Springs Circle.

Councilmember DeJulio stated a couple years ago there was consideration of extending Sandy Springs Circle under I-285. There is no other place for the road to go, unless the City purchases many parcels of land.

Mr. Danchetz stated GDOT will accept comments during the whole process. The City can file this comment now as part of the public hearing process or as part of the draft environmental impact process.

Councilmember DeJulio asked what control Council has over preventing the managed lanes from connecting to Sandy Springs Circle and who makes the final decision.

Mr. Danchetz stated the final decision is made by GDOT.

Councilmember DeJulio stated it is possible even if the City objects to the managed lanes connecting to Sandy Springs Circle, they could still be installed.

Ms. Clowers stated that is possible, but GDOT is trying to partner with the City and take the City's comments very seriously. If the managed lanes at Sandy Springs Circle are not installed, the City may be missing out on a future opportunity.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated if the City asks GDOT to consider managed lanes at Bolyston, the City will maintain the bus rapid transit alternative in order to connect the road from I-285 to Hammond Drive.

Mr. Danchetz stated there is a proposal for a bus rapid transit near the proposed managed lane intersection near I-285. The buses may use the managed lane system instead and then people will not have access to Sandy Springs using the bus service.

Councilmember Paulson stated he is not worried about getting cars to downtown Sandy Springs. He is more concerned with the extra cars on Sandy Springs Circle due to the managed lanes.

## For project information:



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**Twitter:** [@revive285](#)

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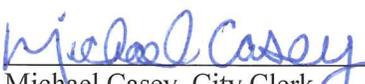
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The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Date Approved: May 21, 2013

  
Eva Galambos, Mayor

  
Michael Casey, City Clerk