



# Johns Creek

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## MANAGEMENT REPORT (MONTHLY)

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**From:** Warren Hutmacher, City Manager

**Date:** March 27, 2017

**Subject:** Monthly City Manager Report to Elected Officials – February 2017

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A monthly status report of various items of interest regarding city business was introduced as part of the January 25, 2016, Council Meeting. The information presented generally follows the six goals established by the Council at the Annual Strategic Planning Retreat. Some projects impact multiple goals and items related to general operations have been added to the end of the Report.

**Transportation: Provide a comprehensive transportation network that facilitates ease of movement throughout the City.**

- **Master Transportation Planning Effort**

- The 6<sup>th</sup> Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) met on February 2, 2017 with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Master Transportation Plan consultants, TSW and Pond along with City staff to discuss the results of the January 3-day workshop. Fourteen out of 24 CAC members were present. TSW and Pond staff reviewed the results of the workshop, which included new street grid systems at Old Alabama and Haynes Bridge roads, Medlock Bridge at State Bridge roads and through Technology Park. Three concepts were discussed for 141:
  1. Freeway option: designed for moving traffic as efficiently as possible, would include on an off ramps. Negatives include difficulty enabling pedestrian/bike/cart use and diminished aesthetics of corridor.
  2. Grade separated street option: grade separation at the intersection of 141 and State Bridge to increase traffic flow. Negatives include difficulty enabling pedestrian/bike/cart use and diminished aesthetics of corridor and private property impact; and

3. Designing more local streets in commercial areas to divert traffic: Using the redevelopment of key nodes (Medlock/State Bridge, Tech Park, etc.) as opportunities for new public streets to give drivers/bicyclists/pedestrians/carts alternative routes to traverse the City.

A master trail system plan was also presented to show continuous loops throughout the City that would carry bike/pedestrian/cart movements. This would give citizens an option other than getting in their car for local trips and could reduce the number of cars on the road in the future. A key transportation takeaway from the meeting was that the public would like to maintain or enhance the character of SR141, design street for local residents and not for the benefit of commuters passing through Johns Creek

- **Transportation Projects in progress:**

- **SR120/Abbotts (Jones to Parsons)**

- Utility poles being relocated
- Drainage being installed

- **ITS3A**

- Boring to begin in April

- **ITS4**

- Materials ordered – installation to begin in April
- Turn lane construction to begin in April - Left turn lane extensions on Medlock Bridge Road at Hospital Parkway, E Johns Crossing and Medlock Bridge Parkway

- **Resurfacing**

- Bids for the 2017 resurfacing project were received 2/9/17. The project consists of 17 subdivisions and 3 main roads. Total project cost (including CEI Services) is \$5,916,789.65. Bids were approved on 3/13/17 and contracts went out on 3/16/17 to contractors. Work anticipated to begin on 4/1/17. Preconstruction meeting scheduled for 3/21/17.

- **Transportation Special Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST)**

- TSPLOST was approved by voters on November 8, 2016. The initial draft strategy for implementation of the projects was presented 3/13/17. First anticipated funds collected by the City in late May 2017. Council tasked with prioritization of projects and staff tasked with developing a wide-ranging engagement strategy as projects move toward design and implementation.

- **Medlock Bridge Transportation Improvements**

- ON HOLD - until further notice

- **Medlock Bridge Road Phase 1**

- ON HOLD - until further notice

- **Sidewalk Plan**
  - Revised policy was approved at the 2/27/17 City Council Meeting
  - First (2) projects are to begin in late March. - Embury Farms Road from Fire Station to Shakerag Park and Shakerag Park to River Trail Middle School
  
- **McGinnis Ferry Rd. at Sargent (Florida T)**
  - Construction to begin in April
  
- **McGinnis Ferry Rd. at Johns Creek Parkway (Right Turn Lane)**
  - Construction to begin in April
  
- **McGinnis Ferry Rd. Widening**
  - Public Information Meeting was held on 3/8/17 at City Hall. Staff continues to work on improvements to a concept design. Project is still in the concept design phase.
  - Staff met with the Seven Oaks HOA to discuss the project (and the Jones Bridge Rd. project). Additional public information meetings are being scheduled with impacted homeowners and monthly public meetings are being scheduled at City Hall.
  
- **Jones Bridge Road Widening (Sargent to McGinnis Ferry)**
  - Public Information Meeting was held on 3/8/17 at City Hall. Staff is working to develop options for sound abatement. Project is still in concept design phase.
  
- **Barnwell Road at Holcomb Bridge**
  - In preliminary design and environmental documentation will be submitted in May to GDOT.
  
- **Rogers Bridge**
  - Public Meeting scheduled for 3/28/17 at City Hall
  - Funding will be requested from ARC by Duluth with a request for matching funds from Fulton, Gwinnett and Johns Creek similar to current arrangement for engineering.
  
- **Federal Dollars for Bell at Boles Rd. and SR120**
  - Council approved receiving additional dollars for the Bell at Boles Rd. (\$73,026) and SR120/Abbotts Bridge Road from Jones Bridge Road to Parsons (\$310,405) projects
  
- **Bell Road Drainage Project**
  - The project is 90% complete. The contractor is working to replace sidewalk removed to install drainage structures.

**Recreation and Parks: Ensure a complete recreation and parks system that aligns to the goals and needs of the community.**

- **Newtown Park**
  - Clubhouse flooring to be installed in April
  - Burkhalter Amphitheater to be re-stained the first week in April
  
- **Shakerag Park CDBG Projects – ADA Wildlife Observation Deck, Fishing Pier and Pathway**
  - Project on Hold
  
- **Autrey Mill**
  - Currently working with AMNP Board on planning and scope for renovations of the Farm Museum
  
- **Shakerag Park – ADA Wildlife Observation Deck, Fishing Pier, and pathway**
  - Awaiting funding release from Fulton County.

**Economic Development: Implement a holistic economic development plan approach that addresses infrastructure workforce, community, and land development needs.**

- **Economic Development Strategy**
  - The City Council approved both Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) on November 7 with both the JCA and the Chamber of Commerce.  
The Chamber of Commerce approved the MOU on November 16 and the finalized MOU was approved by the JCA Board in January.
  
- **Cauley Creek Water Reclamation Facility and Reuse System**
  - Building off of the assessment of the water reclamation facility, staff continues to evaluate options for the future of the facility.
  - Next Step: Discuss options for the Water Reclamation Facility with Council at a future Work Session
  - Next Step: Council approved a termination agreement with Fulton County of the reuse agreement. The County is moving forward with plans to build out a renewed reuse water utility that would include all the previous customers of the Fulton County system.

**Government Efficiency: Develop an innovative and cost-effective approach to exceptional service delivery.**

- **Council Retreat**
  - A complete master calendar of City Council retreats has been approved by the Council with the pre-budget retreat scheduled for April.
- **Charter Task Force**
  - The Charter Task Force recommendations were presented to the City Council on 2/13/17. Public hearings are scheduled to commence on 2/27/17 with both home-rule and legislative changes.
  - Legislative changes are moving through the Georgia General Assembly.
- **10-Year Financial Model**
  - As presented to the full Council at the May 23, 2016, Work Session, the 10-Year Financial Model was rebuilt to allow for modeling of different assumptions and policy choices over the 10-year period.
  - The 10-Year Financial Model was utilized in the preparation of the FY2017 Budget.
  - Staff continues to regularly update the 10-Year Financial Model as new policy choices and alternatives are discussed and considered by Council (such as new park maintenance costs for lighting projects).
  - Next Steps: The FY2017 authorized addition of the Financial Analyst position will allow for further programming, development, and integration of the 10-Year Financial Model.
- **Contract Services**
  - The government service contracts with CH2M and SAFEBuilt (providers of Community Development, Building Permits and Inspections, Public Works, and Recreation and Parks) conclude September 30, 2017.
  - The existing contracts began ten years ago and the City has exhausted all renewal periods.
  - The service contracts must be re-negotiated, re-bid, or insourced.
  - Council's discussions throughout 2016 focused on service level continuity and clarification of expectations.
  - Scopes were drafted to detail the current level of service, workload, and performance for Community Development, Building Permits and Inspections, Public Works, and Recreation and Parks.
  - At the December 12, 2016 Work Session, Council reached consensus for staff to return to the January 9, 2017 Work Session with recommendations for the parameters of a renegotiation with the existing vendors. Specifically, Council requested staff's recommendations for (1) level of service (detailed as scopes of service), (2) cost savings range, and (3) contract types by service area. Council also requested an (4) updated project timeline.
  - Council authorized renegotiation of the government service contracts and asked Jay Lin to participate in the meetings. Staff will be prepared to update the Council in April.

**Public Safety: Provide leading levels of public safety.**

**Staffing**

- **Police:** Three recruits are starting at the Police Academy next week, and three that were already certified are in the field training program that will last approximately nine weeks.
- **Fire:** Three Fireman have started and are now on shift and an offer letter has been sent to a candidate to fill the final open position

**Fire and Emergency Services Feasibility / Service Delivery Alternatives Analysis**

- Contract has been awarded to Management Advisory Group International firm (within City Manager's signing authority) and an initial draft of their report was presented to Council.
- Consultants presented their findings and recommendations at the August 15<sup>th</sup> mini-retreat.
- Chief Hogan presented his 5-year strategic plan to Council at the August 15<sup>th</sup> mini-retreat.
- Next Step: Staff is working with the consultant on a Final report that will be presented to Council by the end of the year based on Council input. Options for a fourth fire station are being prepared for Council consideration.
- Various scenarios are being added to the 10-Year financial model to determine long term impacts for a fourth fire station and various equipment choices.
- Council consensus was to move forward with developing a plan for a fourth fire station to include staffing, a location and cost estimate for the station and the impact on service delivery at the chosen station location.

**Communications**

- **Video Production Manager** – This position has been filled and Connor McFadden started on March 22, 2017

**Revenue**

- **Revenue Technician** – The position for revenue technician has been posted and Finance is currently interviewing potential candidates

**Sense of Community: Preserve our residential character and enhance our sense of community.**

**6.3 Update the Comprehensive Land Use Plan by the end of FY2017**

A CAC meeting with TSW and Pond consultants was held on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to review the input from the public during the 3-day workshop held on January 24- 26. The Consultants presented to the CAC members four land use concepts framed by changing trends in city form. Johns Creek's suburban model has for the past twenty years or so been to place commercial buildings in the center of a lot and surround it with parking creating a situation where one can only drive between buildings through parking lots and walking/biking to stores is an afterthought. A lot of suburban cities have this land pattern – but it is become less desirable as more people want walkability and a real sense of place when they go out to shop, dine and attend entertainment venues. TSW consultants provided concept sketches showing how introducing public streets

into existing shopping centers and adding new commercial buildings could improve walkability, a sense of place and also provide additional streets for local traffic flow. This is implemented by having buildings face streets and public spaces, as well as integrating them into a street grid. These concepts were applied to four commercial areas within Johns Creek:

#### 1. Tech Park

- Currently Tech Park is a collection of scattered office and commercial buildings, not oriented to face onto any street
- Overtime new public streets could be added to form blocks
- Enhance the existing greenway to accommodate multi-use trails
- Integrate the new Tech Park and new City Hall into a new town center
- In time there could be a new network of streets, multiple options for access
- The concept presented showed a mix of uses – as these are variable – it is the infrastructure and street system that matters

#### 2. Medlock Bridge/State Bridge

- The concept presented integrates some existing retail into a new village form
- The consultant team showed the Regal, Target, Home Depot, Historic Warsaw School, Whole Foods and Publix remaining, but the rest of the commercial properties reorganizing, facing the streets and resting in a grid
- New Streets are introduced on all four quadrants integrated with trails, landscaping and parking to create “complete streets”
- The Athletic Club site reflects the same principles aforementioned and also includes an idea for a performing arts center and a series of green spaces
- This site also included a creek trail in the buffer behind the property which would run through the whole development adding another layer of connectivity

#### 3. Newtown Park Village

- This concept showed that after a life cycle of a shopping center it can be reborn as a more walkable village
- A roundabout is integrated into the Haynes Bridge and Old Alabama intersection
- Buildings are brought up to the street and new streets form internal grids for alternative routes including trails connecting to Newtown Park

Lastly the Consultants presented a case study using Sugar Land, TX. Sugar Land has similar stats to Johns Creek illustrating an example of a largely suburban community integrating a town village development into their existing landscape. This development includes a City Hall, public town green and mixed use.

#### Key Takeaways:

- Public understands alternative routes at nodes and is generally supportive of this initiative
- Condensing commercial is preferred rather than promoting sprawl
- Public would like to maintain or enhance character of 141, design street for local residents not through commuters
- Turning derelict shopping centers into temporary or permanent green spaces is another idea heard
- Development of the AAC field is not desired.

The CAC members requested another meeting to discuss a new survey and to get more details on what policy recommendations will be used to frame the updates to the Comprehensive Plan. A 7<sup>th</sup> CAC meeting was scheduled for March 2, 2017.

An 8<sup>th</sup> CAC meeting will be held on Thursday March 30<sup>th</sup> to further discuss land use and transportation uses. The CAC members have requested that the City be divided into 4 or 5 major residential areas and then large maps produced whereby the CAC members can discuss in detail what land uses and where they can be allowed, including the redevelopment of some shopping centers and current vacant land. Transportation items to be discussed will include where traffic signals need to be added or removed and/or synchronized, where roundabouts might help in managing traffic flows in and out of schools and large subdivisions, where multi-purpose trails should be added and where multi-lane parkways should be allowed. The consultants, TSW and POND, will take all of the input from the CAC and public and write the first draft of the Comprehensive Plan Update and the Master Transportation Plan by April 24<sup>th</sup> for staff and CAC members to review. Any changes will then be incorporated and the first draft should be available for the public to review in early May.

- **Noise/Sound Management Concerns for Adjacent Neighborhood**
  
- **Thornhill Community Traffic Management**
  - This spring citizens in the Thornhill community raised concerns regarding speeding, stop sign disobedience and cut through traffic in the Thornhill.
  - Thornhill HOA representatives requested the City allow for an access gate to be constructed at one of the entrance/exits to the subdivision to restrict access for the residents of the subdivision to eliminate cut through traffic by non-residents of the subdivision.
  - Legal counsel opined that a gate cannot be constructed or operated that would give preference to residents of the subdivision over non-residents, since the roads in the subdivision are public roads.
  - Staff has met with Thornhill HOA representatives several times and have suggested alternatives, the JCPD have increased enforcement efforts to deter dangerous driver behavior, and the city installed a “Don’t Block the Box” sign and pavement markings to prevent vehicles from blocking the entrance to Thornhill during peak travel times.
  - Staff met with the residents on June 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - Staff has received an inquiry for permission to allow the neighborhood to construct a gate on a public road that would open for residents and non-residents at the entrance at Old Alabama. Staff has reviewed the request and requested and received a legal opinion. Legal counsel has advised that the City can legally negotiate an encroachment agreement on a public road that would allow for this type of a gate. All costs should be borne by the neighborhood. However, staff also recommends revisiting the situation after completion of the Old Alabama widening project later this year before proceeding.
  - In the interim period, staff has developed recommendations for the installation of this gate with proper precautions and protections for the City and the motoring public, if Council desires to move forward with this request.
  - At the August 15<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, Staff was directed to discuss with the neighborhood a interim solution with Tuff Curb that would simulate the impact of chicanes and splitter islands.



- Thornhill HOA has asked Council to hold off on taking any action as they complete their analysis of the options and evaluate the effectiveness of the Old Alabama Road widening to see if it mitigates the cut-through traffic issues.
- **Doublegate and Long Indian Creek Subdivision Traffic Management Concerns**
  - Staff has met with citizens from both Doublegate and Long Indian Creek Subdivision to discuss concerns they have with speeding, stop sign disobedience, illegal passing of school buses, pedestrian safety and cut through traffic.
  - Staff proposed individualized traffic management solutions for each neighborhood. Doublegate preferred to request increased enforcement of speed limits within the neighborhood.
  - Staff has installed radar signs, striping and new signs in Long Indian Creek to address some of the issues presented by the residents. Staff is collecting data from the radar signs to measure current efforts to reduce speed along this street.
  - Staff met with Long Indian Creek Subdivision on August 4<sup>th</sup> to continue discussions regarding speeding. Staff presented various options for in road traffic management including splitter islands and chicanes. Staff also presented speed data from the radar signs to share with residents the impacts of current measures in place to reduce speeding.
  - Via a sub-committee of the HOA, the residents of Long Indian Creek will look at all the spots along the Long Indian Creek Drive to determine what kind of traffic calming devices are desired. This will be completed and has been submitted to the Public Works staff.
  - Public Works staff will continue to collect data from the two data collectors attached to the speed limit signs. This data will be summarized and shared after September 1, 2016.
  - Public Works staff will take the traffic-calming list received from residents of Long Indian Creek and begin the pricing and time frames for the traffic calming list.
  - This recommendation will be made available to the residents on September 9<sup>th</sup> for review.
  - Council discussed this issue at a September work session.
  - Staff has installed the Tuff Curb to simulate traffic calming devices for the neighborhood at a cost of \$15,435. The stop sign for the neighborhood that was recommended in the warrant analysis has been installed. Staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the Tuff Curb implementation along with gaining community feedback before bringing this item back to Council in the Spring of 2017.
  - Council passed a traffic calming policy at the March 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Staff will begin to implement the policy.

## **Zoning/Development Update**

There were four rezoning cases and two Special Use Permit (SUP) cases heard by the Mayor and City Council at the February Council meeting:

- The SUP-16-001 case for a Mono Pine cell tower on Medlock Bridge Road at Ivy Village was denied 4-2;
- The RZ-16-007 & SUP-16-003 case for a self-storage facility on Jones Bridge Road at Taylor Road was denied 3-3;
- Rezoning case RZ-17-002 to rezone a commercial shopping center known as Addison Place from CUP to C-1 was approved with conditions 4-2;

- Rezoning case RZ-17-003 a request to change a zoning condition for a smaller rear yard setback was approved with a change in zoning condition 6-0; and
- Rezoning case, RZ-17-004, a request to rezone from AG-1 to R-3 to develop two single family homes was deferred to March as the Applicant did not show for the Public Hearing.

The Planning Commission (PC), Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) and Public Art Board (PAB) members are awaiting recommendations by the Mayor to the City Council to fill several vacancies on each board.

### **Other Items of Interest**

#### **Financial Condition**

- Monthly reports sent to Council related to the City's financial condition.
- The City of Johns Creek was awarded triple AAA ratings by two top Bond rating agencies: Moody and S&P.