

**City Council of the City of Greenville
Work Session**

**Monday, November 22, 2021
3:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Location:
Greenville Convention Center, 1 Exposition Drive**

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Knox White; Councilmember John M. DeWorken, Councilmember Lillian B. Flemming, Councilmember Kenneth C. Gibson, Councilmember Wil Brasington; Councilmember Russell H. Stall; and Councilmember Dorothy H. Dowe

CITY STAFF: City Manager John F. McDonough; City Attorney Michael S. Pitts (virtual); City Clerk Camilla G. Pitman

Mayor White called the meeting to order for the purpose of discussing the following matters.

Augusta Street Update

Public Works Director Clint Link introduced David Beaty with Stantec to provide a presentation on the Augusta Street Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Study as located in Council's agenda packet. Mr. Beaty commented specifically on the corridor overview, the technical documents prepared (Urban Design Analysis, Road Safety Audit and Traffic Study), and a proposed schedule moving forward.

Rob Robinson with Stantec reviewed the Urban Design Analysis which included an emphasis on current and future development policies. Mr. Robinson stated the analysis focused on reviewing existing pedestrian conditions, site access and circulation patterns, current land development frontages, land use mix, existing site development criteria and site access. Mr. Robinson provided design and policy recommendations and compared the areas of Augusta Road that have changed to commercial areas while preserving the neighborhoods and residential areas.

Mr. Beaty reviewed the Road Safety Audit and commented on the field study performed. Mr. Beaty advised that two speed studies were performed that showed the average speed at approximately 36 mph in both the commercial and residential areas. Mr. Beaty also advised that approximately 15% percent of the traffic, or approximately 3,500 to 4,000 cars per day, is traveling at a speed greater than 40 mph on Augusta Street. Mr. Beaty referred to what the field study participants experienced during their tour of the area.

Regarding the Traffic Capacity Analysis report, Mr. Beaty provided five alternatives for Augusta Street including (1) Road diet in residential section only, (2) Road diet throughout, (3A) Road diet in commercial, (3B) Lane drop in commercial, and (4) widening in commercial area. Mr. Beaty advised that the analysis considered roundabouts, however, they were found to be unsuitable for Augusta Street. Mr. Beaty provided findings for each alternative and advised that alternatives 2 and 3A likely would not function acceptably, however, the other alternatives would.

Mr. Beaty provided a Phase 1 and Phase 2 implementation proposal of planned improvements including implementation of a road diet. Councilmember Stall asked if Phase 1 is primarily a restriping without structure before committing to hard infrastructure, and Mr. Link responded

affirmatively. Mr. Link stated it could be treated as a pilot project, that staff feels good with the data and analysis, and that additional information would continue to be collected. Regarding expense, Mr. Link stated short term costs are estimated to be around \$200,000.

Councilmember Dowe asked if staff is looking to have a physical barrier on both the East and West side of Augusta Street, and Mr. Link responded affirmatively. Councilmember Dowe asked if there is speed data from the intersection where the death of a pedestrian occurred, and Mr. Link responded affirmatively. Councilmember Dowe asked about developments on Byrd Boulevard and shared concerns regarding the sight line. Mr. Link responded there are still issues at the location and that a road diet would assist with the sight distance. Councilmember Dowe asked about the area between Augusta Drive and Faris Road, the left turns in those areas, and requested staff determine how to manage that area better. Councilmember Dowe expressed her appreciation for including information on the travel time comparison if the road diet is implemented.

Councilmember Gibson stated he is most concerned with pedestrian and bicycle crashes and asked if those occurred more in the commercial or residential areas. Mr. Link responded those crashes were spread throughout Augusta Street and most were at intersections. Mr. Link referred to additional studies taking place and recommended moving forward with Augusta Street while waiting on the results of those studies. Councilmember Gibson asked if there are other streets that have similar traffic volumes and crash analysis. Mr. Link responded there are approximately 20 roads with similar high traffic volumes.

Mayor White commented on enhancements to pedestrian safety in the commercial areas and implementing the same in other corridors. Mayor White stated as development occurs, the City improvements happen incrementally. Mayor White also stated as sidewalks improve and become safer, the City will find that more people will use them.

Councilmember DeWorken stated he feels that many lessons can be learned from Augusta Street and used on other corridors such as Stone Avenue. Councilmember Dowe commented that while there is a need for other corridors, it is not a one size fits all and that a careful study should be performed on each corridor. Councilmember Flemming stated while each area is different, the process should be similar. Councilmember Flemming also stated there should be more encouragement for people to slow down.

Mayor White thanked Councilmember Brasington for his focus and effort on the matter. Councilmember Brasington expressed his appreciation to all involved in the process. Councilmember Brasington asked if the throughput times looked at 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the afternoon. Mr. Beaty responded he would need to confirm those time periods in the study. Councilmember Brasington asked that the City announce where and when it anticipates higher traffic volumes during certain times. Councilmember Brasington asked if the City pursues a road diet that it measures throughput time and calibrate as needed. Councilmember Brasington asked that the City be able to measure the effective average speed limit when it goes into effect. Councilmember Brasington asked what the expected funding source is for the \$200,000, and City Manager John McDonough responded it is appropriated in the CIP.

Councilmember Brasington asked for an update regarding the City's request to SCDOT to accept the roadway. Mr. Link responded he has not received a response back, however, the City has been in contact with SCDOT and has no reason to believe that the request will not be granted. Councilmember Brasington asked everyone to be mindful of the right turn at Byrd Boulevard and

Augusta Street and to consider a road diet in the Aberdeen Drive to Church Street area. Councilmember Brasington expressed his support for the components shared by Mr. Robinson.

Councilmember Flemming asked about issues on Old Augusta Road as individuals travel to Blythe and Hughes Schools. Mr. Link responded Stantec can look at the intersection and consider a turn lane. Councilmember Stall asked if the request to SCDOT includes the section of Augusta Street from Mills Avenue to Main Street, and Mr. Link responded affirmatively.

Downtown Greenville Main @ Broad Proposal

Bo Aughtry with Windsor Aughtry provided a presentation on plans to develop a portion of the green space located next to City Hall as located in Council's Agenda packet. Mr. Aughtry referred to an agreement with the City for use of the green space which ends in 2028. Mr. Aughtry also referred to his interest in using 35% percent of the property for outdoor dining. Mr. Aughtry requested dissolution of the 20-year agreement allowing for more passive utilization of the rest of the property as public space.

Councilmember Flemming asked if the matter has been discussed with staff. Parks, Recreation and Tourism Director Angie Prosser responded that Mr. Aughtry discussed his request with her a few months ago. Mayor White stated the plan is to continue to allow for public use of the other two-thirds of the space including the restrooms. Councilmember DeWorken stated he uses the space on the weekends and while he was originally concerned, he is fine with it since the space still allows for two-thirds public use.

Motion - Executive Session

During the open Work Session, Mayor White asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. City Attorney Mike Pitts recommended going into executive session under S.C. Code §30-4-70 (a)(5) to discuss economic development incentives related to Project Leaf and Project Apollo Update.

Councilmember Gibson moved, seconded by Councilmember Brasington, to go into Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously.

(Executive Session)

There being no further discussions, Councilmember Dowe moved, seconded by Councilmember Gibson, to go out of Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously. No action was taken. Upon reconvening, Mayor White recognized the motion to leave executive session and advised of no actions taken while in executive session.

Swamp Rabbit Trail Extension Cleveland Connector Update

Ms. Prosser referred to activity taking place on the Laurens Road section ("Green Line") of the Swamp Rabbit Trail and introduced Mobility Coordinator Calin Owens to provide three design options for consideration involving the Cleveland Connector (Richland Way) or "Paper Clip." Ms. Prosser asked for directions and input from Council following the presentation.

Mayor White asked about the work taking place on the Green Line section and the type of bridges anticipated along that section. Ms. Prosser responded that areas are being cleared on both sides of the roads and that the bridges have not been fabricated yet. Mr. Owens responded the bridges should be similar to the Spinks Bridge recently placed in Unity Park.

Regarding Richland Way, Mr. Owens provided proposed tunnel options for consideration including (A) restrict to one-way northbound traffic, (B) restrict to one-way southbound traffic, or (C) commit the entire tunnel to the Trail. Mr. Owen requested input from Council regarding the preferred route.

Councilmember Gibson referred to emails and contact he has received and stated he would be in favor of Option C. Councilmember Stall asked if Option C was the recommendation of the Cleveland Park Master Plan, and Mr. Owens responded the recommendation was to provide a more superior pedestrian experience safety wise. Councilmember Brasington asked if nearby neighborhood associations have had any organized voices to accompany the forms of outreach. Councilmember Dowe responded she was in several meetings and that the recommendation was met with resistance from Nicholtown, Cleveland Forest and Alta Vista. Councilmember Dowe requested that staff circle back around to those leaders for additional input. Councilmember Dowe shared concerns with the intersections and stated there is still more work to be done with signal timing and the impact on the intersections. Councilmember Dowe suggested using some type of signage if any portion of the tunnel is open as to warn pedestrians and bicyclists of oncoming traffic. Mayor White recalled some discussions of having the tunnel closed for pedestrians and bicyclists use on the weekends.

Ms. Prosser stated there have been discussions on testing each of the options and advised one of the reasons she likes closing the tunnel is because Cleveland Park has become a speedway with vehicles cutting through the park creating safety concerns.

Councilmember Dowe shared a concern with where the path goes after coming through the tunnel. Mr. Owens responded by sharing information on a proposed bridge connection transferring pedestrian traffic to the Zoo side. Councilmember Dowe asked if everything is paid by Hospitality Tax, and Mr. Owens responded affirmatively. Councilmember Brasington agreed with going back to the neighborhoods to increase awareness of the plan. Councilmember Flemming asked about discussions with SCDOT regarding widening the tunnel. Mr. Owens responded while SCDOT does not have information involving the substructure of the bridge, SCDOT has researched and determined that the bridge is stable and there are no plans to upgrade it.

Ms. Prosser asked for direction in considering the options presented. Councilmember Dowe reiterated that staff follow up with the neighborhoods. Mayor White commented on receiving reactions and determining if there are any other options that are not currently being considered. Councilmember Brasington requested a wholistic view of the process of at least six months to make sure everything is on schedule for the ribbon cutting in 2022. Mr. Owens stated that the option does not affect the Paper Clip at the top, but it does affect it at the road.

Councilmember Dowe suggested calling the Master Plan Steering Committee back together to review and provide feedback regarding the three options. Councilmember Gibson questioned if an option is selected and does not work, how can it be fixed. Mr. Owens responded staff will have to cross that bridge if it happens. Councilmember Brasington added a suggestion to include the neighborhood associations as well in the review and feedback process. Mayor White recommended everyone involved in the process view the site in person.

With no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Camilla G. Pitman, MMC, Certified PLS
City Clerk