



From the Mayor's Desk

May, 2016

The Pedestrian Bridge—More FAQs

Question: Where did the idea for a pedestrian bridge originate?

Answer: Our citizens. The plan for a pedestrian bridge developed from numerous public meetings, workshops, presentations and online surveys that began in 2013 in conjunction with Peachtree Corners' 2033 Comprehensive Plan, the Livable Centers Initiative Study, and the Multi-Use Trail Plan. Residents and business leaders were invited to participate and provide their input. All in all, there were 23 opportunities for public input including meetings, surveys, and interactive planning exercises.

Participants were asked to compose a wish list of amenities they would like incorporated into the study area plan. During these activities, residents identified the need for a pedestrian bridge to provide a safe means to cross from The Forum to the Town Center. In fact, in a 2014 online survey of 575 citizens, the highest ranked priority was a pedestrian bridge.

After the survey, the bridge idea and designs were discussed at City Council meetings all through 2015. In addition the bridge proposal was heavily socialized by the City Councilmembers both online and in newsletters to get additional feedback.

Question: Who will use it? Why do you need a bridge to go from The Forum to the Town Center?

Answer: The bridge is designed for the safety of those walking or cycling on the multi-use trails, attending events at our Town Center and to connect the two sides of the city.

The Town Center, currently scheduled for completion in the fall of 2017, will have a 2-acre town green where events will be held on a regular basis. The total parking capacity of the town center, even with our parking deck, will only have 951 spaces. The developers expect that entire capacity to be in use every day by the folks that live in the townhomes, shoppers, diners, and visitors. Many events will require some parking at The Forum and in surrounding office parks.

Peachtree Parkway currently has a volume of over 40,000 cars per day and will only get busier. Requiring citizens to cross at the intersection puts them at risk of being hurt as well as further slowing traffic on this busy highway. We also expect a significant volume of walkers, joggers and cyclists who will use the trail system and cross the bridge. And it won't just be our own citizens either, we will be connecting with Gwinnett County's trails. The City of Dunwoody has also approached us about eventually connecting to their trail system.

Question: Shouldn't we spend our SPLOST funds on traffic improvement instead of a bridge?

Answer: We are fortunate that it is not an either/or decision. We are able to do both. Now that we are a city, Peachtree Corners receives nearly \$6 million a year in SPLOST dollars that are dedicated to our city. With proper planning, we will be able to address the safety of our citizens whether crossing Peachtree Parkway on a pedestrian bridge or driving in the City. In fact, we've launched a Comprehensive Transportation Study which will provide a road map for the next 20 years to ensure that we meet the community's future traffic needs. The plan will include current traffic and safety issues as well as planning for future capacity and safety improvements. The study is expected to be complete by the end of the year.

Other traffic problems the city is currently addressing include:

- Working with Gwinnett County to widen Peachtree Parkway southbound between Holcomb Bridge Road and the on ramp to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. This project should be under construction by this summer.
- Evaluating a roundabout for Peachtree Corners Circle at Medlock Bridge Road to improve safety at this busy intersection.

- Working with Gwinnett County on plans to widen Spalding Drive at Crooked Creek.
- Studying innovative solutions for Peachtree Parkway intersections at Spalding Drive, Peachtree Corners Circle, Forum Drive and Medlock Bridge Road.
- Analyzing traffic and making recommendations for future improvements along Spalding Drive, Winters Chapel Road and Peachtree Corners Circle.
- Partnering with the City of Johns Creek to determine future project needs for capacity and intersection improvements to increase safety and reduce congestion.

Question: What are the economic development benefits?

Answer: The competition between cities for new businesses and residents comes down to providing the highest quality of life and amenities we can offer. A town center with several restaurants, a 2-acre green space, a movie theatre, and high-end townhomes will only be helped by connection to The Forum and the multi-use trails via a pedestrian bridge. Here are the thoughts of some members of our business community in their own words:

According to Nancy Minor, a leader in the residential real estate community:

“This bridge will have a tremendously positive impact on residential property values. It will immediately identify Peachtree Corners and make it a very special and more desirable place to live. The bridge will be a way to welcome visitors and future homeowners to our community. It will set a tone for a neighborhood that would be a great place to live and work. We need to look at the whole vision for the city. A well-designed bridge pulls everything together and makes a statement for the city.”

Adam Jones-Keeley, President of Conway, Inc. publisher of Site Selection Magazine, a magazine written for business expansion and relocation, had this to say about the bridge:

“As the President of an international company headquartered in Peachtree Corners and a resident of the city, I’m a strong advocate for the construction of an iconic symbol for our community. We need a landmark structure so that we can be known for something more than that city that used to be Norcross.”

And finally James Cate, Managing Principal and Founder, of Glenfield Capital whose company has invested millions of dollars in commercial real estate in our city, says:

“Glenfield Capital has been acquiring office buildings in Peachtree Corners since the city’s incorporation because of their vision for the future. We invested well in excess of \$50 million into eight buildings and we are looking for more investment opportunity in the city. Peachtree Corners’ vision for a Town Center connected to The Forum by way of a landmark pedestrian bridge that also links the multi-use trail from Tech Park across Peachtree Parkway is inspired. This development will have an enormous economic benefit for the citizens and businesses in this city for years to come.”

Question: I thought Peachtree Corners was a limited service City? How can you build a bridge? Aren’t you exceeding your powers?

Answer: The “limit” in limited services, is on the number of services we provide ourselves, not on the scope of any of the services we provide. We provide the same scope of services for community development, code enforcement, and waste disposal that Gwinnett County did before we became a City. No more, no less

There is only one kind of city according to the Georgia Constitution. Each city must ensure all services required by Georgia law are provided to their citizens. The “limit” in our limited services city charter, is on the number of services we provide directly. Those not provided directly, are required to be provided through agreements with other governments, for us, primarily Gwinnett County.

Mayor Mike Mason