



FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

April, 2016

Q&A on the Pedestrian Bridge

Q: Why do we need a pedestrian bridge?

A: The simple fact is the bridge is needed for safety. There are over 45,000 cars that travel Peachtree Parkway daily, and that number is projected to increase to 50,000 within five years. It would only take one distracted driver who doesn't see the pedestrians making their way across the street for a tragedy to occur. It is not a question of "if" a bridge is needed, it is imperative that the city provide a safe means for pedestrians to move easily from the Town Center to The Forum. The Town Center is expected to draw thousands every day. It is not practical to assume people will get in their cars and travel the short distance to cross the street.

Q: If finding a safe way to cross Peachtree Parkway is necessary, then why not consider building a tunnel?

A: Because of a creek that runs underneath Peachtree Parkway, building a tunnel would present a number of issues, one of which would be a continuous problem of dampness due to the close proximity of the creek. Adding a bridge, on the other hand, adds value to the city in terms of appearance and recognition. It is also part of the multi-use trail system and connects the trailheads for walkers, cyclists as well as providing a safe access to the Town Center and The Forum. The bridge would also provide a prominent landmark which would enhance the economic future of our city.

Q: If not a tunnel then why not build just a simple bridge structure that will allow people to safely get from the Town Center to The Forum?

A: We have an opportunity to not only build a safe means to cross the street but one that's a pleasant and enjoyable experience. Imagine crossing over a beautifully constructed bridge with wide walkways, benches and landscaping that winds through trees and flower gardens and ends at the Town Green. It will be a gathering place for community events, outdoor movies, concerts and other activities.

By building more than just a walkway, we have the opportunity to create a distinctive landmark that will serve the community well for years to come. Our city's tagline is "Innovative and Remarkable" and creating something visually distinctive will also

provide a positive economic impact for our city. By keeping our city attractive to new businesses and those looking to relocate, the positive impact will be felt by all of us as we watch our community become a more viable and favored place to live.

Q: Why are the bridge ramps so long? Why don't we just have stairs?

A: The ramps are required to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the grade of the ramps are dictated by the ADA. However, there will be stairs for those who do not want to use the ramps.

Q: Can we afford it?

A: Yes, a pedestrian bridge is a transportation project and qualifies for SPLOST funding. Our SPLOST is dedicated to transportation and since we are the largest city in Gwinnett, we get the most SPLOST funding, almost \$6 million per year. These dollars have helped us launch an aggressive transportation improvement plan to address the traffic problems that existed when Peachtree Corners became a city. For background, SPLOST comes from sales tax spending and non-residents contribute a significant amount to Peachtree Corners. Of the 36,200 jobs in our city, only about 12 percent of the jobs are filled by residents. The vast majority of those jobs are filled by commuters driving into the city via our roads and enjoying our shopping and dining. The sales tax they generate helps pay for road improvements. Peachtree Corners property owners already enjoy a zero millage rate, which makes our net county property tax lower than unincorporated areas of Gwinnett County. No additional city taxes will be needed to pay for the pedestrian bridge.

Q. Where are we in the process?

A: We are still gathering information to help complete the design phase. No decisions have been made and no votes have been taken. The process for developing a bridge actually started with the [2013 Comprehensive Plan](#) which recommended that the City conduct an in-depth analysis of the Town Center area. The Town Center study was completed in 2015 and included the recommendation that a pedestrian bridge be built over Peachtree Parkway as part of a multi-use trail system. Two committees were then formed, (one comprised of citizens, the other a technical committee), to move the bridge project forward. In January, the citizen's committee choice was presented at a well-attended UPCCA meeting. In March, we held a town hall meeting which was also well attended and provided very helpful input. Stay tuned, we'll be holding more information-gathering events in the coming months to get your input.

***Mike Mason, Mayor
City of Peachtree Corners***

