



From the Mayor's Desk

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Improving Traffic Congestion a Major Focus for City

Traffic congestion has been a major issue for metro Atlanta for decades, and the City of Peachtree Corners certainly has its share of congestion problems. Our geographic location is prime for a variety of reasons, and the ease of getting to and from here is one of the best things about living and working in our city.

That ease of access also draws tens of thousands of commuters every day. We cannot change the fact that so many of our neighbors to the north, west and east drive through our city to get to jobs and shopping here, nor do we want to isolate ourselves from them which could lead to adverse impacts to our economic stability.

We have major north-south corridors with State Road 141 (Peachtree Parkway), State Road 13 (Buford Highway) and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. We also have major east-west corridors along State Road 140, (Holcomb Bridge Road), Winters Chapel Road and Spalding Drive. These are very large roadway systems that have been in place for much longer than the city has been a city, and they are managed by State and County agencies. However, the City of Peachtree Corners has traffic congestion as one of its highest priorities and we coordinate on a regular basis with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation (GwDOT).

Though we cannot make immediate changes on our own to improve those corridors due to our position, we are active participants in ongoing projects that we know will make positive impacts for years to come. One of the first projects the city initiated was a Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) project funded in part by the Atlanta Regional Commission for the central part of the city, which incorporated State Road 141, Spalding Drive and Peachtree Corners Circle, among other roads.

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is a Metropolitan Planning Organization that oversees transportation planning for the entire region, and all major projects go through their programs for planning and development. These types of LCI projects study traffic, development and other related items and generate a recommended list of projects for area improvements.

The city followed that project up with additional corridor studies along Winters Chapel Road and State Road 140. In 2016, the city kicked off the development of its first Comprehensive Transportation Plan. This document was similar to the corridor studies, but it encompassed the entire city and includes traffic projections and recommended projects for the next couple of decades. This plan was adopted and now will serve as the road map for future projects for roadway improvements to address congestion, safety and operational needs.

The GDOT Plan Development Process takes 3-5 years for a project to be implemented, but even before that traffic and environmental studies are required to even initiate a project into that phase of planning and development. Making progress on traffic improvements is a slow and arduous process at times, but our team pushes as much as possible on the initiatives we believe are important for the travelling public, both commuters and local residents.

The City is actively working on several projects with GDOT at this time which will serve as planning studies in preparation for specific projects to be programmed through GDOT's planning process. The largest of those projects underway now is the State Route 141 corridor study. This project is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2017. It includes traffic analysis of each of the major intersections along State Route 141 from State Route 140 north to the Chattahoochee River.

In addition to that project, we are working with both GDOT and GwDOT on a project to improve the intersection of State Route 140 and Spalding Drive. The plan for that project is to utilize adjacent traffic signals to improve the east-west traffic operations and reduce congestion on both roads at the same time by using creative ways of handling the left turn movements that cause all through-traffic to have to stop at signals to wait for those turns to clear.

GDOT has a project called the Regional Traffic Operations Program which includes the traffic signal timing management of signals along State Route 140 and State Route 141 through Peachtree Corners. Our staff coordinates with the team of traffic specialists who are involved in this program on a daily basis, and work with them regularly to prioritize upgrades, repairs and changes to timing needs based on changes in traffic. This communication is vital to having our priorities reach those who can affect positive change to these corridors to the maximum extent possible.

The city is also making good use of the Gwinnett SPLOST program. The 2014 SPLOST has already contributed two major projects under construction now that will improve safety and traffic operations. State Route 141 southbound between Holcomb Bridge Road and Jimmy Carter Boulevard is being widened to accommodate an additional access lane onto State Route 141, going from one lane now to two lanes after the project is constructed. That will greatly reduce the congestion point where most of the southbound traffic wants to stay on State Route 141 versus going toward Jimmy Carter Boulevard.

The other project is an intersection improvement at State Route 140 and Jimmy Carter Boulevard, which is aimed to improve the safety of the turning movements at this location and

the adjacent intersections, as well as reduce wait times and congestion for each leg of the intersection.

The 2017 SPLOST program is being drafted at this time, but the plans will include several major traffic improvement projects:

1. Widening State Route 141 between State Route 140 and Winters Chapel Road from three lanes to four lanes, greatly increasing capacity – ultimately extending to I-285 with coordination with DeKalb County.
2. Widening Spalding Drive between Winters Chapel Road and State Route 140 (in addition to the intersection improvements with GDOT noted above), including improvements to the intersection of Winters Chapel Road at Spalding Drive.
3. Intersection improvements to reduce congestion and improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians at Bush Road and Medlock Bridge Road.

As you can see, improving traffic on these major arteries is a complicated process, but the city is dedicated to continually working with the state and county government agencies to enhance traffic flow in Peachtree Corners.

Mike Mason, Mayor