



**SANDY SPRINGS**  
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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Background:

The Johnson Ferry Road at Mt Vernon Highway Intersection Improvement project was first introduced in November 2007. Since that time, the City has held five public information meetings (Nov. 2007, June 2010, April 2015, and two meetings in March 2018), using feedback from those meetings as the concepts were refined.

The project boundaries initially began at Johnson Ferry Rd and Abernathy, through the triangle area and Johnson Ferry and Glenridge Drive, then along Glenridge Drive southward towards Hammond Drive. The project area was reduced and is now just west of Roswell Road to the east of the Sandy Springs Library and including both Johnson Ferry Road and Mt. Vernon Highway through this area.

Current concepts propose a grid system, utilizing a connector road with the goal of improving safety, reducing traffic volumes in the project area within the short block along Roswell Road between Johnson Ferry Road and Mt. Vernon Highway, and easing congestion within the corridor.

Below are questions the City has recently received regarding the proposed plans:

- **Are you displacing a long-term resident to add the connector road?**

No. The City has a long history of working with property owners to come to agreement on best possible outcomes. For example, in developing the Abernathy Greenway Park, a project which started as a state road-widening program, the City worked with a long-term resident, so that she could remain in her home. She continues to live in that same house today. The proposed connector road will be created as a final component of this project. The long-time resident will not be displaced.

- **Why is the connector road needed?**

The connector road is a replacement for the Johnson Ferry Road at Mt Vernon Highway intersection that exists today. Additionally, it replaces traffic movements that would have occurred along Roswell Road and at the intersection with Johnson Ferry Road and at Mt. Vernon Highway because of proposed left or right-turn prohibited turns. It will assist in reducing traffic



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volumes in the short block on Roswell Road, increase safety of the traveling public, and ease congestion.

The connector road provides a choice of turning at that road or on Roswell Road. It will also reduce the route length and traffic pressure at the Glenridge Drive intersections. Additional benefits:

- Reduce North-South movements on Roswell Road through the short block segment
  - Reduce cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets, the Mt. Vernon Presbyterian School Parking Lot, and Sandy Springs Library
  - Allow a longer northbound to westbound left-turn lane (Roswell Road) by precluding southbound left turns at Mt. Vernon Highway
  - Reduce or eliminate spillback of left-turning vehicles into the through lanes along Roswell Road in the short block
  - Prevent additional backups on Glenridge Drive
  - Remove circuitous routes between Roswell Rd and Johnson Ferry Road
  - Allow travelers to shift routes when traveling westbound if another route is backed up
- **If you are not displacing the resident who currently lives in the home targeted for the connector road, how does the project work with her still in that home? Doesn't that prove you don't really need the connector road?**

The City appreciates the unique circumstances of the current homeowner. As a result, the connector road will not be built until the final phase of this project. By constructing the north and south routes, each with two-way traffic, as well as the improvements along Roswell Road, not having the connector road will result in less efficient traffic conditions, high use of side streets for connector, and very circuitous travel for many businesses and residents within the area, particular those needing to use Glenridge Drive as a "turn-around".

It is important to note that motorists have already established non-sanctioned 'cut through' movements through the library and through the church parking lot, which is an indicator of need for such a connector road in this location.

- **How does the connector road reduce traffic collisions at the intersection approximately 1/3 mile away?**

The amount of congestion within the block of Roswell Road between Johnson Ferry Road and Mt Vernon Highway, and the close proximity of these one-way pairs, is of concern for both operations and safety. With regards to safety,

- The excess turning volumes lead to more vehicles conflicts and vehicle-miles traveled,



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- The short block spacing introduces weaving sections and increases the frequency of driver decisions, and
- The amount of vehicle congestion/stacking spills out of the available turn bay storages, which introduces further potential for vehicle conflicts.

The project seeks to alleviate many of these concerns by prohibiting the southbound left turn on Mt Vernon Highway from Roswell Road and providing east-west routes to vehicles traveling Johnson Ferry Road and Mount Vernon Highway. The planned connector road replaces the “triangle area” that connects Mt Vernon Highway and Johnson Ferry Road with two T-intersections, which increases its safety by decreasing the number of conflict points, and it improves its efficiency such that the east-west corridors can operate independently of each other. The connector road also prevents the shifting of turning movements and safety concerns to other already congested areas, such as Sandy Springs Circle, and reduces the potential of cut-through traffic onto the library parking lot or the adjacent neighborhood roads.

- **How does removing the connector road affect the project, most specifically at Roswell Road?**

With removal of the connector road, but instituting the precluded southbound to eastbound left turns onto the south route, as well as the northbound to eastbound right turns onto the north route, traffic will still need to find its way to desired destinations. It is likely that Sandy Springs Circle to Mt. Vernon Hwy. (and the reverse) will be over-loaded during peak conditions. In addition, the duration of the peak travel will broaden over time. Hilderbrand Drive will likely be used very heavily to provide connector to the south route via Boyleston Drive and even Harleston Road. These local roads are not conducive to high traffic volumes from a capacity or from a neighborhood impact perspective.

It is also likely that the elimination of the connector road will put more pressure onto Glenridge Drive. This diversion is more circuitous for motorists, and since Glenridge Drive will likely remain a two-lane roadway, it will need to accommodate increasing background traffic (traffic not related to the current project) in the future, let alone diverted traffic from the currently planned connector road.

For business and residents along the north and south routes as well as both Johnson Ferry Road and Mt. Vernon Highway, the elimination of the connector road would potentially require very indirect routes (traveling all the way to Glenridge Drive and then along Glenridge Drive in order to turn back westbound to get to the desired destination).

The ability for drivers to make decisions on whether to continue along the north route or south route will be eliminated by not providing an opportunity for drivers to switch over to the other route. This would be particularly crucial during congested conditions.



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We also take into account current motorist trends. In particular, motorists have already established non-sanctioned 'cut through' movements through the library and through the church parking lot, which is an indicator of need for such a connector road in this location.

- **Why isn't the City using other transportation upgrade suggestions as an alternative to the 'cut-through' options suggested –**

- **Enhance the intersection of Sandy Springs Circle at Johnson Ferry, perhaps in conjunction with the physical separation of Mt Vernon and Johnson Ferry?**

The construction of the connector road will provide vehicles with a more attractive alternative to both Sandy Spring Circle (which is currently near capacity) and Hilderbrand Drive (which leads through neighborhood areas). Using this mobility management strategy, the amount of vehicle-miles traveled, the frequency of intersection through which they are traveling, and the number of conflict points through which they are traveling can be reduced. Each of these reductions would also have safety benefits that can often be overlooked.

- **The intersection of Roswell Road and Johnson Ferry could be enhanced through the addition of a "pork chop" and a "slip lane" allowing for northbound Roswell Road traffic to proceed eastbound on Johnson Ferry with less delay.**

Northbound vehicles on Roswell Road turning east on Johnson Ferry Road would yield to southbound, left-turning vehicles on Roswell Road creating a backup on Roswell Road. There are concerns that this would create backup on the northbound through lanes, which this project is trying to reduce. There are also concerns about the sight angles that drivers would be required to turn their heads to view these conflicting vehicles.

- **The intersection of Boylston Road, Johnson Ferry and Mt Vernon could be redesigned to provide for connection from Mt Vernon to Johnson Ferry with traffic signal coordination, possibly in conjunction with the road separation envisioned in the Full Grid proposal.**

The spacing of a Boylston Drive intersection from Roswell Road would raise concerns of vehicle queueing in excess of available storages, eastbound stacking at the connector road potentially spilling onto Roswell Road and westbound stacking at Roswell Road potentially blocking the connector road.



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- **The Glenridge Drive and Mt Vernon intersection could easily be enhanced with addition of a left turn lane allowing northbound Glenridge traffic to transition westbound on Mt Vernon.**

Improvements at Glenridge and Mt Vernon Hwy. may not make the route more attractive than other routes within the project corridor. Without the connector road, drivers will have the option of using other routes nearby, including the library parking lot, Mt Vernon Presbyterian Church parking lots, and adjacent neighborhoods using roads such as Hilderbrand Drive. There is already evidence of this type of cut-through traffic occurring.

- **Are you widening the road to three lanes?**

No

- **Why is the city going to prohibit no right turns from Northbound Roswell Road to Johnson Ferry Road?**

Because of the skewed angle of the east leg of the intersection, providing this movement would create safety hazards, particularly with larger vehicles and trucks. A triangular, “pork chop” right turn with either a yield condition or continuing lane along eastbound the north route of the project (turning lane with an island) was examined for vehicle movements and safety. However, because of the skewed angle of the road, many drivers would continue to stop shortly after making the right turn in order to enter the eastbound lane. This could potentially create spillback of vehicles into the northbound Roswell Road through lane (a condition which could result in a greater number of accidents as well as being unacceptable by the Georgia Department of Transportation which is concerned about safety and vehicle efficiency along Roswell Road.

- **Why is the city going to prohibit left turns onto Mt Vernon Highway from Roswell Road?**

In order to reduce accidents along the short block of Roswell Road between Johnson Ferry Road and Mt. Vernon Highway, the left turns were eliminated. This is due to three reasons:

- Vehicles making a right turn onto Roswell Road from Johnson Ferry Road are currently weaving over to the inside lane and then into a short turn lane at Mt. Vernon Highway. This weaving condition results in higher potential of accidents due to the very short distance that this maneuver can be made.
- Because of the current back-to-back left-turn storage lanes, vehicles are often spilling back into southbound and the northbound through lanes along Roswell Road. This promotes rear-end accidents as well as side swipes when through vehicles need to skirt around them.



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- By eliminating the southbound turn lane, the northbound turn lane can now be lengthened almost the entire length of the short block, thus allowing more northbound vehicles, particularly heading north along Roswell Road from south of the project area, to stack in advance of the turn.

- **I've heard reports that traffic will only improve three minutes after this project. Is this correct?**

The proposed improvements are to increase safety in this corridor and help with efficiency of movement along these roadways. Travel times always vary by time of day and other factors, such as weather, which can affect traffic flow. It is anticipated that the travel times, particularly for vehicles heading westbound along Mt. Vernon Highway, as they approach Roswell Road, can be reduced. This is because the connector road will help to distribute the westbound traffic and, thus, allow greater time savings. The same holds for westbound traffic along Johnson Ferry Road which will be able to either continue to Roswell Road or switch over the north route via the connector road.

- **A southbound left turn from Roswell Road to the eastbound lanes on the northern grid road (north route) will alleviate the need to remove the southbound Roswell left turn lane to the eastbound lanes on the southern grid road (south route). There should be no back up into the through lanes because vehicles will now turn left at the northern grid road.**

The southbound to eastbound lefts onto the north route will reduce the left turns onto the south route. However, as historical data shows, people will take the path of least resistance. If the left-turn movement is still allowed onto the south route, those motorists who want to go to eastbound Johnson Ferry and beyond will likely take that route, making it impossible to lengthen the northbound to westbound storage lane as needed.

Future considerations are also important. Demand onto the south route will continue to grow, and the recommended designs take that future traffic demand into consideration.

- **What about putting right and left turn lanes in the planned green space which could alleviate the need for the connector road and the storage capacity it provides?**

While this alternative could possibly work for eastbound traffic from the north route as well as westbound traffic from the south route, it does not take into consideration the reciprocal traffic movements. Because of these issues, it was not considered as a viable option. This option is not available with the compressed grid.



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- **There is skepticism in the neighborhood that providing a right turn from northbound Roswell Road to the eastbound north route will cause stacking on Roswell Road.**

There are two things working against the northbound right turns onto the eastbound north route as it relates to the example above: 1) No exclusive right-turn lane is provided along Roswell Road to absorb the stacked vehicles. As a result, it is likely that some vehicles will encroach into the outside northbound through lane and impede the traffic flow; and 2) the skew of the intersection will make it difficult, if not impossible, for larger vehicles and trucks. Signs could help, but there is no way of assuring that large vehicles will not attempt the maneuver.

- **I read on social media that there were other alternatives proposed, but none of those recommendations were utilized. Why?**

We received feedback at each of our previous public meetings, and that feedback was taken into account as the design concepts were updated. Evidence of this inclusion can be found in the reduction of the project scope, the move from the dual roundabouts to the grid system, moving the proposed connector road, and incorporation of green space and sidewalks into the overall design. As this project does affect performance at six intersections, in some cases, a suggested alternative may have been a possible idea for one location, but created negative impact within the network.

- **Is the “reading park” just to the east of the east Sandy Springs Library parking lot still being considered for the connector road?**

Based on community concerns regarding the use of the park as a connector road, this concept was determined undesirable. Through discussions with Fulton County and the Sandy Springs Library staff, the use of the east parking lot was not a viable option.

- **If I live on the south side of the connector road, will my connection to and from Johnson Ferry Road be affected?**

With the inclusion of the connector road through the property just east of the reading park, both the north and south ends would need to be signalized. This could affect access for some homeowners during heavy traffic periods during the day. In order to resolve this issue, the concept plans include consolidating driveways, primarily those that already are shared by two homes, into a singular driveway which would line up directly on the south side of the signalized intersection. As a result, those homes will be provided more protected access into and out of the driveways.



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- **Residents on the south side of Johnson Ferry Road and on the north side of Mt. Vernon Highway can currently walk across the street to access the library and reading park. Why do we need the traffic signals?**

The traffic signals are needed to control the various crisscrossing movement, much the same as currently exists near Boyleston Drive. Because of the current and anticipated traffic volumes, the traffic signals are an integral part of providing safe and efficient traffic flow at the connector road termini. With the inclusion of these signals, pedestrians will be able to cross both Mt. Vernon Hwy. and Johnson Ferry Road more safely during all periods of the day.

- **This traffic is the result of putting City Hall across the street. Why didn't city leaders foresee this issue and build elsewhere?**

Safety concerns at this intersection predate the City Springs project, with development of the first set of plans taking place shortly after cityhood. The first public meeting took place in 2007. The City did slow down progression of the project as plans were developed for City Springs to make sure we were taking into account all traffic needs, including those resulting from construction at Johnson Ferry, Mt Vernon and Roswell Road.

- **Why is it necessary to do anything at all? The road works fine as is.**

The main goals for this project are to improve safety and improve efficiencies in this area. Between 2014 and 2016, there more than 150 accidents in the project area, 36 of those where people were injured. There is a determined need to improve access and mobility through this area to protect both the people who travel through and those who live within this area.

In developing these projects, we also take into account future growth. It is unrealistic to assume that everything will remain the same. Sandy Springs is a desirable place to work and live, and we need to accommodate the resulting growth that is occurring.

- **Has the City Council made a final determination?**

A presentation is planned for the Sept. 4, 2018 City Council meeting where direction from the City Council is expected.