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**FEBRUARY 23, 2023, 4:30 p.m. - WORKSHOP and CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING**

**CITY GOVERNMENT**

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS**

**OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN**

**SAVANNAH, GEORGIA**

The work session and City Manager's briefing was held at 4:32 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Alderman Purtee to offer a prayer.

**PRESENT:**

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding  
 Alderwoman Kesha Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1  
 Alderwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2  
 Alderwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1  
 Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2  
 Alderwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3  
 Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman  
 Alderwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5, Mayor Pro-Tem  
 Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

**ALSO, PRESENT:**

City Manager Joseph A. Melder  
 Chief of Staff Daphanie Williams  
 City Attorney Bates Lovett  
 Clerk of Council Mark Massey  
 Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Safe Streets for All - Vision Zero](#)

[Exhibit 1: Safe Streets for All - Vision Zero Update Presentation.pptx](#)

City Manager Melder stated both presentations are related to transportation. He thanked Senior Director, Transportation Services Stephen Henry and the Traffic Engineering Department as well as Executive Director Caila Brown of Bike Walk Savannah who was consulted on the Action Plan. The Plan will be released after today's Workshop for the public. Mr. Henry will give the presentation of Safe Streets for All - Vision Zero and Assistant City Manager Lloyd will present Roadbotics:

Following both presentations there were comments and questions from Council Members:

- Alderman Purtee asked if an updated Artificial Intelligence (AI) Scan could be done in 2024 rather than 2025. There have been almost six years since the last scan. Mr. Lloyd stated that's a valid point, but the City would rather re-scan when the resources are available to pave/repave the roads.
- Alderman Palumbo asked the life span of asphalt and how roadbotics accounts for the different types of road surfaces throughout the City. Mr. Lloyd replied, The AI system performs all the analysis.

As it relates to Safe Streets for All, Alderman Palumbo asked how the City prioritizes investments for the school zones. Mr. Henry and City Manager Melder discussed that schools were originally in communities for children to walk to school; however, now buses are bringing children to schools, so an effort by all involved (School Board, Parent-Teacher Group, CAT, City) to form a partnership will need to take place to accomplish priorities.

- Alderman Leggett asked how the City assesses the streets knowing under the streets there is constant movement, there are sink holes, and new development causing streets to collapse. This is happening in real time. Assistant City Manager Lloyd replied, the City has an asset management program to handle all underground infrastructure. With the AI and the asset management programs, hopefully, at some point both technologies could be combined on the same platform to manage streets and underground infrastructure. Alderman Leggett expressed concern about the Broughton Street tunnels and other utilities and the possibility of a collapse. Mr. Lloyd stated Broughton Street was put back the right way, underground utilities in the right place, and they added compacted soil. The goal of the City is to correct any prior possible errors in development when they arise, so there will be no mishaps in the future.
- Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked about the status of the pilot program on Drayton Street. Mr. Henry indicated the pilot program will be driven by crash data and high injury. Drayton and Whitaker Streets did not fall under that category. City Manager Melder discussed the possible future plans of Drayton and Whitaker Streets; i.e. lowered speed limits, one lane with a bike lane, etc.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked if any action will be taken on Anderson and Henry Streets. Mr. Henry replied, speed limits were lowered from 35 mph to 30 mph.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter discussed the concerns of Mr. Armstrong on Henry Street with City Manager Melder. Does the City have a mechanism to respond to Mr. Armstrong's complaints. Mr. Melder stated enforcement is a key element of Vision Zero. There may be a way to funnel enforcement with human behavior by engaging the police department and traffic engineering in enforcing speed limits and issuing tickets; the school zone speed cameras are an example. The City does respond to requests when there is a complaint.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked Mr. Lloyd, as it relates to SPLOST dollars, where were the street repairs. Mr. Lloyd indicated the table in the presentation outlined the repairs and he explained the repair process.

- Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz commented on the positive changes from 2018. She thanked Mr. Lloyd for continuing to diligently work on solutions. Mr. Lloyd introduced and acknowledged Mr. Richard Spivey who heads up the program.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked Mr. Henry, when slowing down the speed limit on neighborhood streets, how will you enforce slower traffic? City Manager Melder believes most people will comply with the lower speed limits and for those who speed, there will be more enforcement in place.

- Mayor Johnson requested an update on total street repairs from 2022. Mr. Lloyd replied the report will be completed in April and sent to Council.

Mayor Johnson asked Mr. Henry if the DEI person participated on the Task Force (yes). Mayor Johnson discussed the differences in concrete versus asphalt; so the repairs will be different and the product looks different. Carver Village has concrete streets; the repairs make the streets look as if different products were used for repairs. To be

equitable, there should be a system to bring the repairs up to look uniform as in other areas of the City.

For the safe and complete streets initiatives, Mayor Johnson discussed prioritizing schools, parks and community centers as it relates to traffic calming. Making these locations the first priority.

Mayor Johnson encouraged City Manager Melder to continue conversations with the State and Ports as it relates to heavy trucks and buses riding on roads not designed for their use. Equity would mean building roads to withstand the heavier weights.

- . Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked if there are bike lanes on the Southside. Mr. Henry replied yes and named the streets (Windsor Road, White Bluff to Largo, Largo, and Windsor to Park). She asked if the bike lanes will be extended on the Southside (Middleground Road side). City Manager Melder indicated, that area is included with the Truman Trail, Phase IIB and the Middleground Road section is on the work plan for this year.
- . Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderman Palumbo discussed the State transportation full funding through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) expansion of Tide-to-Town; Middleground Road bike trail.
- . Alderwoman Lanier discussed pedestrian behavior and their lack of attention in the streets. She asked if there is any type of education offered. Mr. Henry replied the education starts in the schools and there are local campaigns for visitors. Alderwoman Lanier recommended additional signage.

Alderwoman Lanier expressed concern for equity as it relates to traffic calming priorities with regards to devices in low wealth areas. Alderwoman Lanier asked when did the City move from subjectivity to objectivity. Mr. Lloyd replied, in 2020. She expressed concern that the State has approved increased weight for 8-wheeler trucks which will cause more weight on City streets. Alderwoman Lanier and Mr. Lloyd discussed the AI scan as it relates to timing of repaving streets, longevity (deterioration) of paved streets, and how the City/AI scan prioritizes which streets should be paved. Alderwoman Lanier encouraged City Manager Melder to conduct another AI scan soon. Mr. Melder responded the City has set an industry standard rate at every three years.

Mayor Johnson indicated Mike Vaquer of the Vaquer Firm stated a House Bill for increased weights for 18-wheeler trucks was sent back to Committee.

- . Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked Mr. Lloyd if the AI scan program reads concrete as well as asphalt. Mr. Lloyd replied the program only cares about the quality of the road surface, it reads both. She expressed concern that the roads in West Savannah are not being repaved.

The PowerPoint presentation is on file and available for viewing in the Clerk of Council's office.

## [2. Roadbotics](#)

[Exhibit 1: Roadbotics Presentation.pptx](#)

PRESENTED by City Manager Melder and Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd.

Following the presentation, there were comments and questions by Council:

SEE ITEM #1

The PowerPoint presentation is on file and available for viewing in the Clerk of Council's office.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 6:04 p.m.

A video recording of the workshop can be found by copying and inserting the link below in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=trad17iK2TeK>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

**Date Minutes Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

