

August 25, 1967

The Honorable Ivan Allen, Jr.
Mayor of the City of Atlanta
City Hall
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Mayor Allen:

Regarding the letter from Mr. Edmund W. Hughes, Managing Director of the Atlanta Traffic and Safety Council, dated August 10, 1967, seeking "to determine whether the City will be willing to pursue this matter and seek to have the State make this federal money available", we have the following report.

We strongly recommend that the City of Atlanta do everything within its power (financially and politically) to cooperate with and participate in the newly initiated program of the Bureau of Public Roads, which is called Traffic Operations Program to Increase Capacity and Safety (termed the "TOPICS" program). Immediately after receiving your memorandum on August 22, 1967, we again thoroughly reviewed the status of this type of program in the Atlanta area with the Bureau of Public Roads people and the State Highway Department people to make certain that we were up to date regarding their thinking. The Bureau of Public Roads people are very anxious for a city like Atlanta to set up projects under this program. They are also very anxious for the State of Georgia to participate in the program. All federal funds under this TOPICS program are available only through the Georgia State Highway Department. At this time, the Georgia State Highway Department has a firm policy against spending any of their funds for this purpose in Atlanta or any other cities in the State. We, of course, believe that this policy should, can, and will be changed. As mentioned above, we believe that the City of Atlanta should welcome assistance from the Atlanta Traffic and Safety Council and any other citizen group towards the end of having this policy changed.

Before any federal-aid system submittal or program to effect traffic operation improvements on Atlanta streets can be approved, it must be supported by a comprehensive area wide plan for traffic operation improvements, including a program for implementing a significant portion of the plan within five years. The tremendous amount of work necessary to make the basic street and traffic inventories and to develop the plan may be financed with money that also could be made available by the State Highway Department. In addition, the actual designs for traffic operation improvements can also be programmed as preliminary engineering jobs, and a portion or all of this work can be financed with federal aid money which is currently coming to or is available to the Georgia State Highway Department.

Since the plan or any submission must be based on an area wide inventory and an analysis of all elements related to the plan for all streets and highways on a federal aid system in the area, we have been exploring ways and means of producing

The Honorable Ivan Allen, Jr.
August 25, 1967
Page Two

such an inventory and plan in preparation for setting up specific projects to submit at such time as the State's policy may be changed.

Since the State Highway Department has a firm policy against participating in this TOPICS program, we have been unable to obtain much information and only a few opinions from State Highway Department personnel. The Bureau of Public Roads people, however, have been very specific in their insistence that an area wide plan must include as a minimum all of the area within the Circumferential Freeway (I-285) and probably needs to extend over a larger area. This immediately brings up the difficulties and probably the impracticality of the City of Atlanta undertaking to finance such a study without any outside help. Also, the study tends to parallel the present continuing coordinated comprehensive traffic planning study, which is under way in compliance with the 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act. However, the area wide plan for traffic operation improvements is a more detailed and specific type of study than the study under way in compliance with the 1962 Federal Aid Highway Act. It is our opinion that it is impractical for any single governmental agency in the Atlanta area (such as the City of Atlanta) to undertake by itself the development of an area wide plan for traffic operation improvements. We have a very strong feeling that this project should be undertaken and financed by the State Highway Department with the federal aid money available to them for purposes of this sort. Once this plan was developed and approved by the Bureau of Public Roads, specific traffic operation improvement projects (such as the ones that we currently carry on in our daily program in the City of Atlanta) could be set up and submitted for federal aid money. This money, of course, coming to the State Highway Department and then on to the City of Atlanta.

We have made a rough estimate that the area wide plan for traffic operation improvements could be completed by a consulting firm in a period of approximately six months. We have not yet obtained an estimate of the cost from any consulting firm, but we are guessing that the cost might range from \$50,000.00 upwards to \$200,000.00.

Anticipating your concurrence with our recommendation that the City of Atlanta do everything within its power financially and politically or influence-wise to cooperate with and participate in this TOPICS program, we are arranging to discuss in general terms the cost of such an area wide traffic operation improvement plan with some consulting firms. These explorations will be done without in any way committing the City of Atlanta and simply for the purpose of determining a little more accurately exactly what kind of an expenditure might be necessary on the part of the Georgia State Highway Department in order to get this program under way in the City of Atlanta. It would, of course, be unwise for the City of Atlanta or anyone other than the Georgia State Highway Department to undertake to finance such a study since the study would only be useful if the Georgia State Highway Department was agreeable to participating in the program. If the Georgia State Highway Department is interested in participating in the program, the cost of the study would be a comparatively minor item in the total outlay and, therefore, it should not be difficult to get the Highway Department to take care of this particular cost.

The Honorable Ivan Allen, Jr.
August 25, 1967
Page Three

We hope that this report is clear and that it contains sufficient information to answer the questions that need answering at the present time. We have available a substantial amount of additional detailed information regarding the TOPICS program and we will be happy to discuss it with you in more detail at any time that you desire.

Sincerely,



Karl A. Bevins

KAB/cmc

cc: Mr. R. Earl Landers ✓
Alderman Jack Summers