



ATLANTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Work Session – April 18th, 2018

AGENDA

Atlanta Department of Transportation Study



- ▶ Welcome – Councilmember Andre Dickens
 - ▶ Why We Commissioned the Study
 - ▶ Study Timeline
 - ▶ Recommendation Overview
- ▶ Presentation from WSP, Inc
- ▶ Comments from City Administration
 - ▶ Comment from Department of Public Works
 - ▶ Comment from City Planning
- ▶ Discussion & Q&A with Councilmembers
- ▶ Public Comment
- ▶ Adjournment



WHY WE REQUESTED THE STUDY

City Council Resolution 17-R-3003 was passed to conduct a feasibility study of the creation of a single, transportation-focused department.

The purpose of the study was to:

- ▶ Better understand the current transportation landscape in Atlanta
- ▶ Determine what issues are caused by current structure
- ▶ Learn what peer cities are getting right
- ▶ Evaluate whether a DOT is the right solution for Atlanta

THE RESOLUTION

City Council Resolution 17-R-3003 specifically poses three items for study:

1. City's transit needs are not clearly consolidated under any single Department of the City
2. The “primary responsibility for transportation infrastructure design, construction, and maintenance” falls within the purview of the DPW
3. DPW’s mandate which also includes “issues unrelated to transportation such as sanitation, recycling and fleet services.”

STUDY TIMELINE

- Jan 2017 - 17-R-3003 Proposed by Councilmember Dickens
- Jan – Mar 2017 – Resolution Presented to NPU & Other Stakeholders
- Mar 2017 – Resolution Adopted by City Council
- Jun 30th, 2017 – Study Presentation Due to Council
- March 8th, 2018 – Presentation Received by Council
- April 18th, 2018 – First Work Session

DELIVERING MOBILITY FOR
THE CITY OF ATLANTA:
*ASSESSMENT OF A STANDALONE
ATLANTA TRANSPORTATION
DEPARTMENT*



April 18, 2018



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Study Background

Introduction

Atlanta City Council **Resolution 17-R-3003**, as amended, called on the Public Works Commissioner,

“ to conduct a feasibility study of the creation of a single transportation-focused department, an Atlanta Department of Transportation (DOT), that would design, operate, manage and maintain the City of Atlanta’s transportation system and transit projects and infrastructure.”

Commissioner to provide results to the Transportation Committee no later than June 30, 2017.

A RESOLUTION
BY COUNCILMEMBER ANDRE DICKENS

A RESOLUTION BY COUNCILMEMBER ANDRE DICKENS REQUESTING THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY REGARDING CREATING A SINGLE TRANSPORTATION-FOCUSED DEPARTMENT, AN ATLANTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT) WITHIN THE CITY OF ATLANTA THAT WILL DESIGN, OPERATE, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN THE CITY OF ATLANTA’S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND TRANSIT PROJECTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE; AND FOR PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the City of Atlanta ("City") has made major strides to administer its public transit services in a manner that establishes an effective and safe public transportation system and provides the public and businesses access, mobility and enjoyment.

WHEREAS, currently, the City’s transit needs are not clearly consolidated under any single Department of the City, and

WHEREAS, Department of Public Works, which also handles issues unrelated to transportation such as sanitation, recycling and fleet services, has primary responsibility for transportation infrastructure design, construction, and maintenance based on various sporadic funding allocations; and

WHEREAS, the City has historically underfunded its transportation infrastructure investments with the exception of special bond and tax investment initiatives which provide unsustainable temporary funding to offset long term funding shortfalls, and

WHEREAS, multiple City agencies, quasi- City Agencies, and community partners, including but not limited to the Atlanta Beltline, The City Parks Department, The Buckhead CID, the Midtown Alliance, and ADID routinely seek the cooperation of the City in securing and utilizing State and Federal funding to support their respective project initiatives, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Community Development’s Mobility Planning manages updates to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan/The Connect Atlanta Plan; and

WHEREAS, to accomplish this goal, the City has invested in several major transit initiatives designed to alleviate traffic congestion and improve the City’s transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, on November 8, 2016, City of Atlanta residents overwhelmingly voted to authorize a four-tenths of a penny Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax for Transportation ("T SPLOST") to help generate approximately \$300 million to fund significant and expansive transportation projects citywide, over a five-year period; and

WHEREAS, additionally, City of Atlanta residents also voted to authorize a half-penny sales tax for transit expansion and enhancements for the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority ("MARTA"); and

Introduction

Sources of Information and Data

1. Review of data, documents, budgets, and plans provided by or obtained from the DPW and other City agencies.
2. Interviews with leaders within and outside of City government, regional partners, and Atlanta's three Community Improvement Districts (CIDs).
3. Interviews with executives from eleven "peer cities" across the nation and the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO).



Initial Interviews

Purpose: Insight into the City's transportation knowledge, capacity, finances, and operations, and to identify whether there were evident problems that could be ascribed to the current management and governance structure.



Interviewees

Buckhead Community Improvement District

Central Atlanta Progress / Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (CAP/ADID)

Midtown CID/Midtown Alliance

City of Atlanta Department of City Planning

City of Atlanta Department of Public Works

City of Atlanta Department of Law

City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation

Renew Atlanta/TSPLOST

Atlanta Beltline, Inc.

Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)

Atlanta Committee for Progress

Atlanta Chief Operating Officer

Peer City Interviews

Purpose: Compare how the City of Atlanta currently manages its transportation program with best practices from municipalities around the nation, and identify strategies for enhancing delivery of transportation projects and services, and the pros and cons of having a single transportation-focused department responsible for all of a city's transportation system, projects and improvements.

Interviewees

Baltimore City Department of Transportation Acting Director Frank Murphy

National Association of City Transportation Officials Director of Policy and Special Projects Corinne Kisner

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Director of Sustainable Streets Tom Maguire

City of Dallas Assistant City Manager Jill Jordan

Seattle DOT Director Scott Kubly

City of Oakland Policy Director of Infrastructure & Transportation Matt Nichols

Houston Department of Public Works and Engineering Deputy Director Jeffrey Weatherford

San Antonio City Engineer & Department of Transportation and Capital Improvements Director Mike Frisbie

City of Denver Deputy Chief of Staff Evan Dreyer

Miami Department of Public Works Director Juvenal Santana

City of Nashville Director of Transportation and Sustainability Erin Hafkenschiel

Philadelphia Deputy Streets Commissioner for Transportation Richard Montanez

Strengths of the Current City Structure for Transportation

What Works Now



What Works Now

Mobility planning in the Department of City Planning

DCP is facilitating a shift in transportation philosophy in a direction that metropolitan and city transportation agencies across the nation are moving toward, in particular “Complete Streets”, which acknowledge the need for the public right-of-way to serve drivers, transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Success in gaining public support for capital funding

The City has been successful in acquiring local, state, and federal transportation funds.

Innovative capital project delivery methods

Both Renew Atlanta/TSPLOST and the Atlanta Beltline, Inc. (ABI) are delivering projects in an innovative and effective manner.

Effective partners

Atlanta’s CIDs have taken leadership roles in moving toward Complete Streets and a multi-modal future. They are strong partners that can help City agencies improve the transportation system.

Responsive maintenance

DPW is effective at identifying immediate transportation asset maintenance needs.

What Doesn't Work Now

Center Line Miles of streets resurfaced	
Year	Total
2007	78
2008	-
2009	33
2010	13
2011	17
2012	5
2013	21
2014	12
2015	33
2016	24

Weaknesses of the Current City Structure for Transportation

What Doesn't Work Now

Leadership and Vision

The City's transportation effort needs an influential, visionary leader who can unify the disparate transportation units within City government and inspire and recruit talented transportation staff with a vision of what a modern urban transportation agency should be accomplishing.

Lack of Resources

DPW programs are underfunded and the staff are at capacity with workload. DPW needs to think more in terms of higher levels of reliable, long-term funding sources that can augment what is already available through the bonding programs.

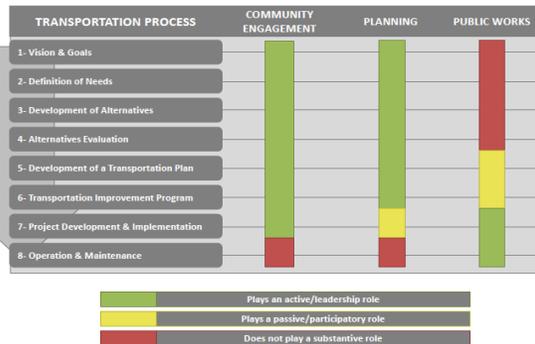
Lack of Appropriate Capabilities

DPW lacks the capability to actively oversee and implement an asset management program, financial management, contract administration, and federal procurement, and offers low pay that erodes its ability to attract and retain capable staff to deliver projects.

Lack of Coordination and Collaboration

With no "go to" person for transportation in the City who could provide overall coordination and oversight of mobility issues, interagency coordination is not occurring systematically, and collaboration with CIDs, ABI, and MARTA should be strengthened to align transit visions with the City's transportation plan and vision.

Stages in the Transportation Process and the Roles Played by Planning, Public Works, and the Community



Peer Cities

Lessons Learned / Common Themes

1. Restructuring is not the solution for poor transportation outcomes. However, restructuring can be the **catalyst for better outcomes** if other necessary changes are made too.
2. Restructuring often takes time to see lasting effects, and should involve a **transition period** with targeted implementation steps aimed at achieving very specific change objectives.
3. **Strategic planning** efforts can develop an approach to institutionalize changes, guide long-term policy direction and vision, and set a timeline for action.
4. One city hired a full-time **Interim Transportation Director** to help ensure the development of a Strategic Plan, hire staff, and reorganize the agency.
5. Strong transportation organizations attract and retain talent by establishing clear **career paths** for engineers and planners.

Lessons Learned / Common Themes

6. **Formal interagency coordination** is present in cities where a transportation / public works agency does not have responsibility for all phases of capital project delivery.
7. Deputy Mayors / Assistant City Managers, Mayors' Offices, policy groups, Commissions and Boards have played important roles in evolving the transportation **policy-setting process**.
8. Recently, city "transportation" agencies have often been re-branded as "**mobility**" agencies to reflect a broader, multimodal perspective.
9. **Solid waste** responsibilities were found to be enterprise organizations. **Fleet management** responsibilities were also often found as part of a public works department, or housed in the Mayor's Office.
10. Perceived successful **project delivery** agencies tend to house all phases of the project development and delivery pipeline in one organization.

Peer Cities

Rationale for Recommendations

- The City of Atlanta has been successful in gaining public support for transportation funding. It should continue to reinforce and enhance this support.
- City transportation issues are multimodal – serving motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and freight. Having separate agencies for each makes it that much more challenging to address multimodal issues.
- Almost all stakeholders interviewed agreed that Atlanta needs to move in a new transportation institutional direction.
- Creation of a standalone, transportation-focused department could catalyze and provide the focus to address the City's transportation needs and serve as a point-of-contact for stakeholders inside and outside the City.
- Coordination among different transportation groups within City government would be more effective.
- Notable examples in Atlanta peer cities of a movement toward city transportation (DOT) agencies.



Findings and Recommendations



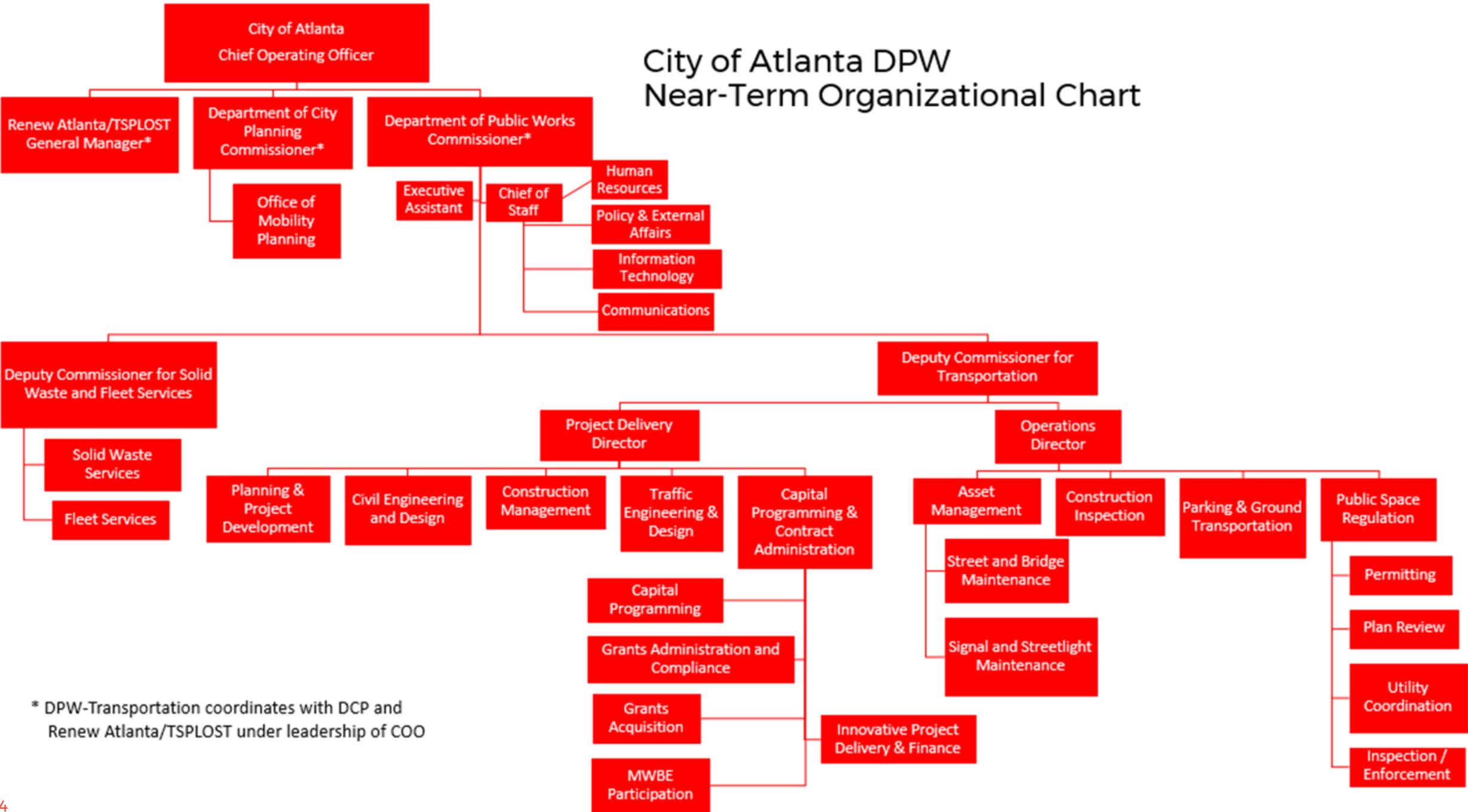
Structural Analysis

- Most organizational “disconnects” in Atlanta are attributable to issues of business process and communication, cultural or other issues in the organization independent of how it is functionally structured.
- Providing overall coordination for DPW’s transportation functions, DCP’s Office of Mobility Planning, and Renew Atlanta comes with additional considerations:
 - Do not diminish what works, e.g., Renew Atlanta project delivery; and
 - Need for decisions on the remaining functions at DPW (Solid Waste and Fleet Management).
- Not all of the issues identified in the report will necessarily be fully addressed through the creation of a new standalone transportation-focused department.

Near-Term Recommendations

Consolidate transportation functions currently within DPW into **DPW's Office of Transportation**, led by a **new Deputy Commissioner** hired from a national search, who reports directly to the DPW Commissioner.

City of Atlanta DPW Near-Term Organizational Chart



* DPW-Transportation coordinates with DCP and Renew Atlanta/TSPLOST under leadership of COO

Near-Term Recommendations

Keep Your Options Open....

- During two-year transition period, the City's focus should be on:
 - Recruiting the right **talent** to lead the various divisions and sections in the DPW transportation office,
 - Acquiring **additional budget and FTEs** to effectively perform baseline capabilities for a transportation agency,
 - Strengthening **policy-setting and coordinating bodies** through the Chief Operating Officer,
 - Developing a **Strategic Business Plan**, and
 - Establishing and utilizing **standards and procedures**.
- Transition period could be permanent if the perception and performance of the Office of Transportation meets the expectations of the public, stakeholders and elected officials.
- After the two-year interim period, the City should **assess** whether to proceed with the creation of a standalone transportation department.

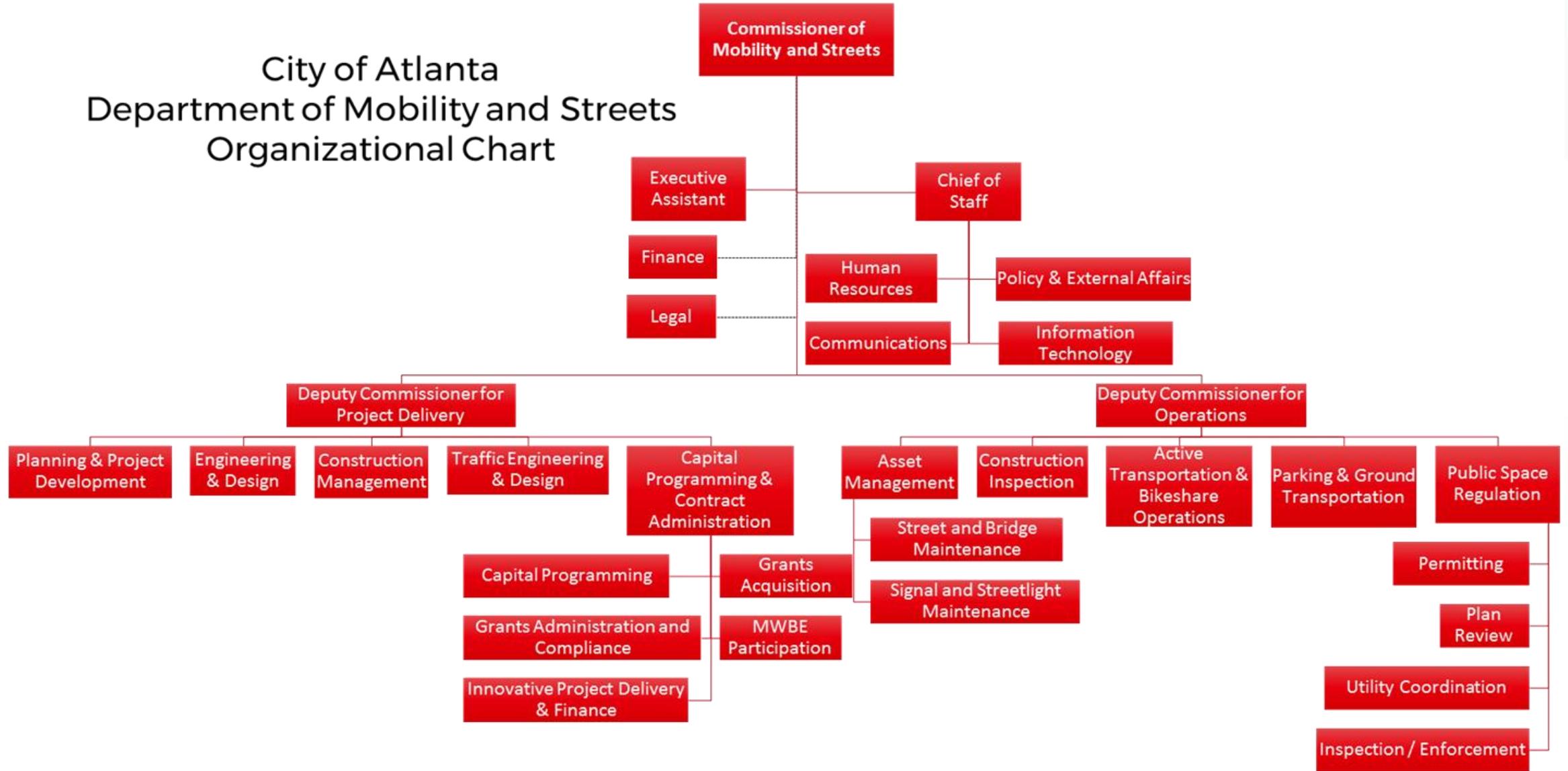
Long-Term Recommendations

- Consolidate all transportation functions in the City, currently within DPW, DCP, and Renew Atlanta/TSPLOST, into a **standalone transportation-focused department**, led by a new Commissioner.
- New structure to be approved by the City Council following a substantial public engagement process before adoption.
- Name the agency the “**Atlanta Department of Mobility and Streets**” (ADMS).



Rationale: Constituents need to know where to go for issues relating to streets (will still be a big issue), but mobility should be a clear focus of the new agency.

City of Atlanta Department of Mobility and Streets Organizational Chart



Action Plan

	Actions
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present findings and recommendations of this study with the Mayor, Chief Operating Officer and City Council.• Explain decisions to DPW management and staff.• Hire a DPW Deputy Commissioner for Transportation and other key positions (Operations Director, Project Delivery Director, Assistant Directors).• Develop a detailed near-term organizational chart for DPW and a change management plan.• Establish and implement formal coordination between agencies and with external stakeholders.• Complete a Strategic Business Plan.• Undertake a workforce assessment.• Perform a financial assessment.• Complete a recruitment and retention study.• Decide whether ADMS could be set up as a self-sustaining enterprise agency.

Action Plan

	Actions
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Propose budget for DPW's Office of Transportation that includes recommended level of funding and FTEs from financial and human resource assessment, and determination of whether it could be set up as a self-sustaining enterprise agency.• Hire other key transportation positions.• Complete an assessment of the future for Solid Waste and Fleet Services.• Undertake a formal assessment of the effectiveness of the near-term transportation structure to determine whether there is a need to proceed with establishing ADMS.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine whether to proceed with establishing ADMS. If so,<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Formulate a reorganization plan to be submitted by the Mayor to the City Council,✓ Introduce and enact legislation creating ADMS, and✓ Prepare resource needs to be included in the proposed budget.

Thank you.

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