

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Aldermen
From: Joseph A. Melder, City Manager
Date: December 22, 2021
Subject: Enmarket Arena Interim Parking and Traffic Plan

In a Memo to Council last week I outlined challenges the City is experiencing with infrastructure surrounding the Enmarket Arena. While construction of the Arena, itself, has also had to overcome a number of challenges over the past two years, the facility remains on schedule to receive a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy that would allow a January 13 ribbon cutting and soft opening, followed by full opening on February 19.

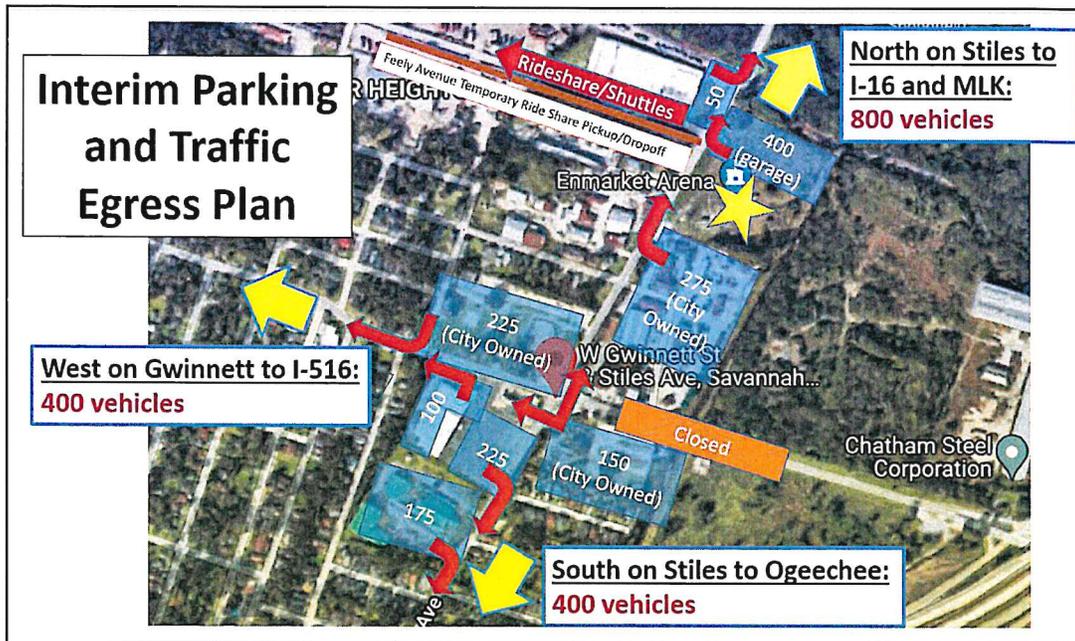
Much of the infrastructure surrounding the Arena, however, will not be complete until May or June, primarily due to complicated environmental remediation, unmarked historic infrastructure that required relocation, and unprecedented supply-chain disruptions, labor shortages and COVID-19 impacts. These projects include:

- Stiles Avenue, which is being widened to four lanes with new sidewalks and bike lanes, from Gwinnett Street to the Arena.
- Gwinnett Street, which is being widened to four lanes with new sidewalks and bike lanes, from the I-16 overpass to Stiles Avenue.
- A 2,000-space surface parking adjacent to the Arena. We expect the southern half of the lot, which will hold roughly 1,000 spaces, to become available for parking in March; remediation continues on the northern half.
- Widening of the Springfield Canal and construction of a bulkhead adjacent to the Arena.

Team Savannah has been meeting regularly with our contracted Arena Operator, OVG, to develop an interim parking and traffic plan intended to allow the Arena to open while minimizing impact on surrounding roadways and neighborhoods. The City brought on Jacobs, a leading traffic engineering consultant that has worked on traffic plans at other arenas, to help develop an interim traffic management plan at the Enmarket Arena. OVG brought on Walker Consultants, which specializes in parking operations plans, to help develop an interim parking plan.

The interim parking plan utilizes City-owned property around the Arena and large parking lots along Stiles Avenue owned by two churches, with whom OVG has developed

agreements. Those eight parking areas will provide an estimated 1,600 parking spaces during the first several months of Arena operations. OVG will require ticket-holders to reserve space in one of these lots through its online ticketing software, with information including required routes to the reserved parking lot sent to customers via direct email communication.



On-site parking will be supplemented by a temporary Uber/Lyft zone abutting industrial property on Feeley Avenue, which will be closed to through traffic during events. To help reduce traffic and parking pressure during larger events, OVG will also operate free trolley shuttles, which will transport customers from the Historic District to the Feeley Avenue pickup-dropoff zone.

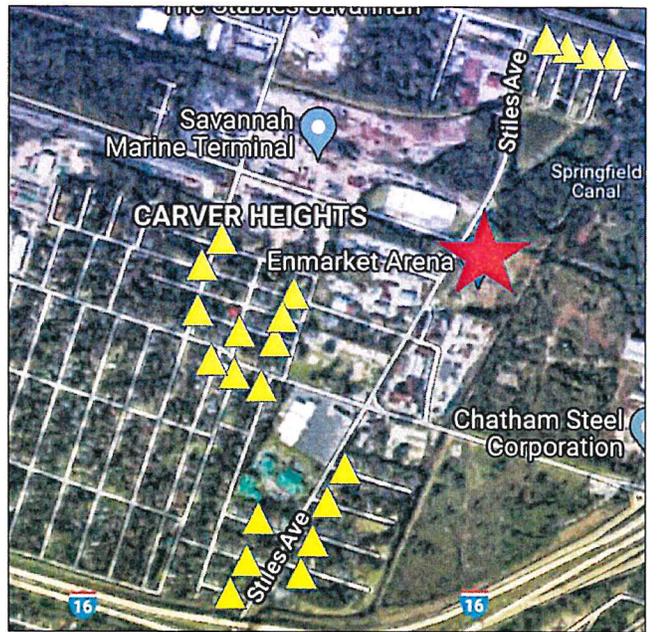
We will station Savannah Police officers at key intersections in this area to help facilitate traffic flow, and install more than a dozen temporary light arrays to increase safety in the parking lots. Three workers will be stationed within each lot to expedite the parking process.

After events, the traffic officers will force customers leaving each lot to depart via specific routes, with the goal of not overloading each segment of Stiles Avenue and West Gwinnett Street. We have activated a contract with traffic control company AWP, who we work with during large special events such as St. Patrick’s Day and the Rock N Roll Marathon. AWP will deploy traffic cones and barricades, and “Resident Parking Only” signs to help protect surrounding neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Protection

Traffic control contractor AWP will deploy traffic devices and "Resident Parking Only" A-frames at intersections to residential streets.

 Location of Resident Parking Only barriers

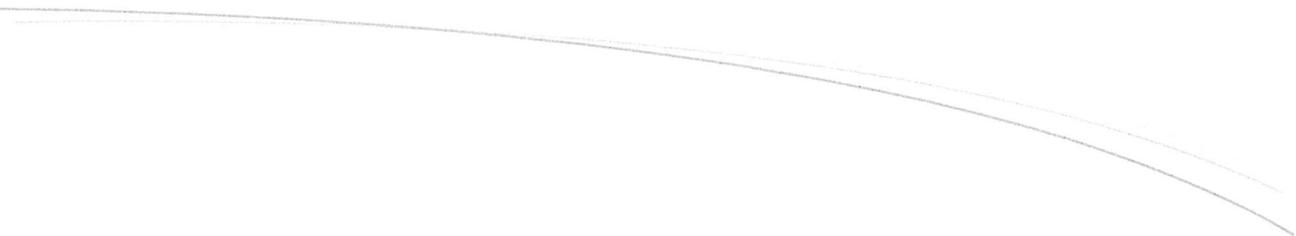


Modeling from traffic management consultant Jacobs predicts the heaviest traffic delays before and after large events occurring on Louisville Road and Boundary Street. The reality, however, is we do not know exactly how traffic will behave. We plan to operate our Emergency Operations Center during the first two events in January, with the largest event capped at 4,000 attendees. Our Traffic professionals will deploy drones during the events to help manage traffic real-time, and provide us with video footage to make adjustments for future events.

There will be disruptions, and residents who live in the neighborhoods near the Arena will experience elevations in traffic in the hour before and after events. While these disruptions will likely be greater in this four-month interim period, we will likely experience many of the same neighborhood impacts even after our permanent parking and road projects are complete.

We will do everything we can to minimize these disruptions, but there will be a period of trial and error as we adjust to changing traffic patterns. If we decide the impacts of these temporary parking and traffic solutions are too great on surrounding residents, and the Enmarket Arena product is too poor for customers, we will cancel large shows until our infrastructure is complete.

The opening of the Enmarket Arena is an exciting milestone for this community, and will be a great addition to Savannah's westside. But it is a big change, and we will work with our stakeholders to manage that change. We plan to deliver letters to surrounding



homeowners this week notifying them of our interim parking plan, offering contact information if they have questions or concerns, and inviting them to the Enmarket Arena Grand Opening.