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## **Oakwood, Lanier Tech planning new 'community' sign**

Sign proposed for Atlanta Highway and Thurmon Tanner Parkway

It's a far cry from your typical green, roadside welcome sign fastened to a metal pole and stuck in the ground.

The city of Oakwood and Lanier Technical College are moving forward on plans to build a "community" sign off Ga. 13/Atlanta Highway at Thurmon Tanner Parkway and Interstate 985's Exit 17.

"We're excited about this," Oakwood City Manager Stan Brown said last week. "We think it's going to be a nice entryway. ... It's been something we've worked on for quite a while, and we're glad to see it finally coming together."

Brown showed City Council a possible design for the sign showing a stacked-stone foundation, 19-foot-wide aluminum arbor and electronic message board. The sign also will feature space for Oakwood and Lanier Tech logos.

"That'll be our front door in from the north," Brown said.

Officials have met with the Georgia Department of Transportation "and we've got sort of a way ahead on how to get the permitting process done for this," Brown said.

Also, Lanier Tech Foundation is working toward sponsorships to pay for the sign, which would be less than a mile from the school, and Rochester & Associates of Gainesville "is going to donate the engineering that's needed to get the permit," Brown said.

The new sign would give the school "an entrance to the college, which we've never really had before," said Russell Vandiver, Lanier Tech president.

"We've always had a shared entrance with (neighboring) Gainesville State (College)."

The project is especially important "because, as Thurmon Tanner grows and develops — which it will and there is some great potential out there — it's going to give us a lot of traffic," Vandiver said.

Thurmon Tanner was conceived years ago as developmental roadway running parallel to I-985, such as Satellite Boulevard is to Interstate 85 in Gwinnett County.

The remaining unfinished link in the four-lane road - a stretch running between Plainview and Mundy Mill roads - is set to be completed Friday.

"From a marketing standpoint, (the sign is) going to really help people identify where Lanier Tech's Oakwood campus is."

Project costs are unknown at this point.

"We've got a lot of work to do on getting site approval and all that," Vandiver said.

The city has a "gateway plan" for other, similar signs spread across the city, including two on McEver Road, which runs on the west side of town.

"Nothing is definitive or specific at this point as we are still in the planning stages," Brown said.