

in gridlocked traffic on Marietta Boulevard trying to get between Northside Drive and Phillips Arena.

As a traffic reporter, this should make me happy. It doesn't. As a sports fan and as a proud Atlantan this makes me angry. There's no excuse for a city like ours to lose a professional sports team. There are a very few select cities in the country that can claim franchises in the "big four" pro sports (baseball, football, basketball and hockey). We used to be able to make that claim. We just went from being among the New Yorks and the Chicagos of the world to the Clevelands and the Pittsburghs. And I'm going to be reminded of this fact 41 times next year.

There are going to be 41 fewer occasions when I stop at Legal Sea Foods or Taco Mac for dinner. There are going to be 41 fewer occasions when I stop at the Starbucks in CNN Center and get a cup of coffee. There are going to be 41 fewer occasions when I take a friend down to Phillips Arena to see perhaps the greatest spectator sport on the planet.

I'm not going to place blame on anyone for this happening. Blaming someone won't change what happened.

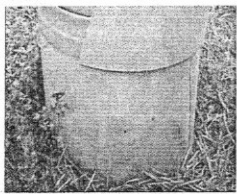
We lost a part of the city that helped make Atlanta special. The Thrashers and hockey in general might not have been everyone's cup of tea, but neither is the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra nor Atlanta Motor Speedway nor Stone Mountain. But they all have their passionate fans, and this city is better because they are here.

The saddest part about this loss is that it appears to be permanent. Unless the NHL decides to relocate the floundering Phoenix franchise to Atlanta after next season (a HUGE long shot), this city will never again get a chance to see the greatest hockey players in the sport. Never again get the chance to wear a sweater and drink hot chocolate inside Phillips Arena. Never again get the chance to hear the great Dan Kamal call an Atlanta hockey game on the radio.

Traffic will be lighter 41 days next year. Just don't expect me to be happy about it.

Gridlock updates

Mark Arum's column appears Mondays. Listen to his traffic reports daily on AM 750 and **now** 95.5FM News/Talk WSB, and see him each morning on Channel 2 Action News. Connect with Mark by email at mark.arum@coxradio.com; Twitter @markarum; or Facebook: markarumWSB.



This is just one of the broken pedestals in a Cobb County neighborhood. *Debbie Koach Special*

Koach lives in the Carrie Farms subdivision in Kennesaw, and we alerted our contact at Comcast, who immediately got back to us about the situation. Comcast media spokesperson Cindy Kicklighter sent us a response.

"We sent a tech out to the neighborhood yesterday (June 1) to do an assessment and to close or repair the pedestals that he could fix. Our field manager is working to identify the



locations of the peds that need further repair and then they will turn the project over to our construction group to complete," Kicklighter said.

crosswalk button at the intersection of Memorial Drive and Warren Street SE. We received a notice from Atlanta officials that the situation had been fixed nearly immediately after we reported it.

John Thompson

What's broken near you?

We want tips from across metro Atlanta. Call us at 404-526-2546 or e-mail us at fixit@ajc.com

The week ahead

Public meetings that affect your community.

Clayton County Board of Education

What: Regular monthly meeting to deal with a variety of topics ranging from board policies to purchasing reports to Clayton Preparatory Academy Charter.

When and where: 6 p.m. today, Administration Complex, 1058 Fifth Ave., Jonesboro.

What it means to you: School district is setting priorities and other matters. *TAMMY JOYNER*

Forsyth County to reveal preliminary 2012 budget

What: County staff and finance committee will present its preliminary 2012 budget to the County Commission.

When and where: 2 p.m. Tuesday, Suite 220, County Administration Building, 110 E. Main St., Cumming.

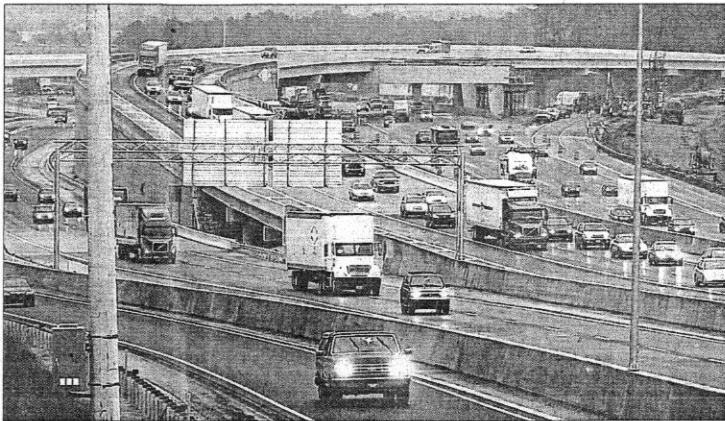
What it means to you: A chance to hear the preliminary budget and discussions about what action may be needed to balance it, including cuts, and discussions about public hearings, tentatively slated for July 7 and July 21, regarding the millage rate. *JEFFREY SCOTT*

Gwinnett to get I-85 interchange update

What: The Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District Board of Directors will get an update on the Pleasant Hill Road "diverging diamond" interchange at I-85.

When and where: 9 a.m. Wednesday, Gwinnett Commerce Center lower level conference room, 3700 Crestwood Parkway, Duluth.

What it means to you: The diverging diamond design will make traffic in both directions cross over to the left side of the road as it approaches the bridge over the interstate. Supporters say the design will alleviate traffic congestion. *DAVID WICKERT*



Vehicles head west from Ga. 316 onto two flyover lanes feeding into I-85 southbound and Pleasant Hill Road. A "diverging diamond" interchange at Pleasant Hill Road and I-85 is coming. *Staff 2007 photo*

Decatur City Commission

What: During its regular meeting the Decatur City Commission will have public hearings on both rebalancing the city's districts for City Commission and city school board elections, and on the proposed 2011-12 city budget.

When and where: 7:30 p.m. today, City Commission Meeting Room, 509 N. McDonough St., Decatur.

What it means to you: In the first of two public hearings concerning the budget, it's recommended the overall millage rate be reduced slightly from 13.035 mills to 13 mills. Meantime, given the recent census data showing Decatur's northern district as significantly larger (population 10,437) to its southern (8,896), Decatur will have to alter its local election districts. The Supreme Court decrees that election districts must have roughly the same number of residents. *BILL BANKS*

Fulton County Board of Education

What: The board meets for its regular monthly work session and first official meeting with new Superintendent Robert Avossa.

When and where: Starting at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday with an executive session. The meeting is at the school system headquarters, 786 Cleveland Ave., Atlanta.

What it means to you: Issues on the board's plate this month include final approval of new school attendance lines on the county's north side and passage of a budget for fiscal 2012. *NANCY BADERTSCHER*

State Board of Education

What: The board conducts its monthly meeting over two days.

When and where: Each day's meeting starts at 8 a.m. in the board meeting room, 2070 Twin Towers East, across from the Capitol.

What it means to you: Board sets education policies and looks this week at hiring a national expert to help Georgia development new ways to evaluate the effectiveness of its teachers and school leaders. *NANCY BADERTSCHER*

Milton City Council

What: The City Council will hear a report from Fulton County's chief appraiser concerning the city's tax digest.

When and where: 6 p.m. today, Milton City Hall, 13000 Deerfield Parkway, Milton.

What it means to you: The report should give residents a preview of whether real estate values are rising, holding steady or falling. Those values are used to determine how much money the city will have to count on in 2012. *PATRICK FOX*