Mayor and Council Communication
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Wednesday, June 23, 2010

CHARLOTTE.

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AGENDA NOTES:

Agenda Item #49 – S. Crigler Street and Marvin Smith Road Closings at CSX Railroad
Staff Resource: Tim Gibbs, CDOT, 704-336-3917, tgibbs@ci.charlotte.nc.us

CSX Railroad is planning to add a railroad track parallel to the current track between I-85 and the Pinoca Yard intermodal facility. The Pinoca Yard is where CSX Intermodal operates a truck-to-rail transfer terminal. It is located off Rozzelles Ferry Road between Hoskins and Hovis roads in northwest Charlotte. The project will increase overall corridor capacity and assist with moving trains into and out of the Pinoca Yard. Population and business growth in the Charlotte region has generated demand for intermodal freight movements which necessitates the additional terminal capacity. Trains arriving at the yard currently block the Hoskins Road crossing for several minutes during switching operations.

CSX's intention to add an additional track within their existing right-of-way will allow for more switching to be contained within the yard, minimizing impacts at the Hoskins Road crossing. The transportation study completed for the project shows that even with increased freight movement, the new railroad track will prevent the Hoskins Road crossing from being closed for periods any longer than under current conditions.

The City is being asked to close the S. Crigler Street railroad crossing and a portion of Marvin Smith Road just south of its current intersection with Hoskins Road. Marvin Smith Road is located within the CSX right-of-way parallel to the current railroad track. CDOT supports closing the crossing and relocating Marvin Smith Road as:

- The closure supports a higher safety level needed for the motoring public because of the wider crossing and track grade,
- It will improve operations for the motoring public and railroad yard, and
- CSX is funding the project.

CDOT, the North Carolina Rail Division, and CSX held two public meetings on February 25 and June 3, where they shared the proposals and heard residents' concerns. CSX initially proposed also closing the Golf Street crossing but decided against it based on feedback received at the February 25 meeting. CDOT staff met with neighborhood leaders following the June 3 meeting and will continue to work with the Hoskins community on access to the area thoroughfare network. CSX may implement the project within the right-of-way without the City's action to close the crossing.

The attached map shows the proposed closures and the area where the additional track will be built. These street closure items are on the June 28 City Council agenda.

(attachment: see left side table of contents)

AGENDA NOTES (continued):

Agenda Item #58E-J – Property Transactions: Condemnations
Staff Resource: Charles Anzalone, E&PM, 704-621-1093, canzalone@ci.charlotte.nc.us
Laura Rushing, E&PM, 704-336-3122, lrushing@ci.charlotte.nc.us

Mr. Timmy R. Cook has signed up to speak at the June 28 Council meeting regarding Item #58E. This condemnation is one of six needed (Items E, F, G, H, I, J) in preparation for sidewalk installation along Dawn Circle, part of the Hidden Valley Phase VI Neighborhood Improvement Project.

The Hidden Valley NIP is funded with 2008 NIP bonds and includes sidewalk, curb and gutter and installation of a waterline and storm drainage culvert. Construction is scheduled to start in November, with completion anticipated for April 2011.

These six condemnations will complete acquisition for Phase VI of the NIP, with 45 of the 51 property owners having already signed easements (88% success rate). The following table details the explanation for each condemnation:

Property Transaction	Property Address	Explanation
E	601 Dawn Circle	Attempts to negotiate with the property owners have not produced an agreement. They have asked for compensation far in excess of the appraised value.
F	621 Dawn Circle	Unable to locate owners.
G	514 Dawn Circle	This parcel is going to condemnation in order to clear title.
H	508 Dawn Circle	One of the owners is out of country, can't be reached and has no POA for anyone else to sign for him.
I	426 Dawn Circle	This parcel is going to condemnation to clear title.
J	414 Dawn Circle	Parcel is in bankruptcy and is going to condemnation to clear title.

INFORMATION:

CharMeck 311 Reduced Service Hours

Staff Resource: Saskia Thompson, City Manager's Office, 704-336-4947, sthompson@ci.charlotte.nc.us

Effective July 10, calls to 311 after 8 p.m. will be answered by an automated system that will route calls to the appropriate agencies available for service delivery. CharMeck 311 will reduce a portion of its operations and will have 311 customer service representatives managing calls for service between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily including weekends.

After 8 p.m. callers should continue to call 311 as usual for access to non-emergency local services such as:

- **Utilities** (water main breaks, sewer issues and other non-billing related services)
- **CMPD Non-emergency crime reporting and animal control services** (available until 1 a.m. via phone and online 24-hours-a-day)

It is anticipated that this change, approved by Council during the FY11 budget process, should have a limited impact on citizen service delivery since 92% of all call volume to 311 occurs between the hours of 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. Of the calls that occur during the hours where 311 will no longer be staffed by customer service representatives, the majority will continue to receive service through automated routing of calls.

Citizens will not be required to learn a new 10 digit dial or modify behaviors for the majority of calls historically serviced by 311. Citizens will experience little change for critical services that are provided 24 hours daily by City and County agencies and should experience no change in responsiveness or service delivery. Technology enhancements will automate routing of these calls to those critical service providers that have been and continue to be available 24/7. Therefore, citizens are encouraged to continue dialing 311 ,24 hours daily, and will receive the same access to critical non-emergency services as they are today. After 8 p.m. callers to 311 will be asked to select a prompt that will route them automatically to the service provider chosen. Additionally, callers will be provided with information for access to internet/on-line service delivery available at www.charmeck.org and will also be able to perform payment of Utility bills via phone through the current interactive voice response system as they are today.

The City Manager recommended the reduction in hours as part of the FY2011 budget approved on June 7 by the Charlotte City Council. The reductions are part of the Manager's plan to identify opportunities to reduce department operating budgets without affecting service delivery. The reductions to 311 eliminate service between the hours of 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. when call volume is the lowest. Funding for 12 vacant positions was eliminated. Seven agents and one supervisor have been reassigned to the revised operating hours to enhance service delivery during the highest periods of citizen demand.

INFORMATION (continued):

For information, please note the following that created the business case for the City Manager's recommended reduction in 311 operating hours:

- Approximately 92% of all call volume for CharMeck 311's 1.8 million calls annually occur during the hours from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. CharMeck 311 agents will continue to be available during these hours.
- A portion of calls received after 8 p.m. and before 7 a.m. are for non-critical service requests and can be addressed via a web request.
- There are limited opportunities for service delivery during the hours from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. given that the majority of service agencies within the City and County operate traditional business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Callers are reminded that for any emergency situation where the presence of a police officer is immediate and necessary for service delivery, they should continue to call 911.

June 27 – CATS to Hold Emergency Exercise
Staff Resource: John Trunk, CATS, 704-432-2560, jtrunk@ci.charlotte.nc.us

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) along with the Charlotte Fire Department, Mecklenburg EMS, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD), Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will train for possible transit emergencies in a mock light rail vehicle incident on Sunday, June 27.

The I-485/South Boulevard Transit Station will be closed from 6:00 a.m. until 11 a.m. on the morning of the training. CATS will provide bus service to the Sharon Road West Station for passengers transferring or walking to the I-485/South Boulevard Transit Station. All remaining LYNX park and ride locations will be open during the drill.

A Riders Alert notifying the public of the drill was placed on all light rail vehicles as well as posted on the CATS website. The media was notified by a press release that was sent on Monday. CharMeck 311 has also been notified.

June 29 – Access to Capital for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs Summit
Staff Resource: Tom Flynn, Neighborhood & Business Services, 704-432-1396, tflynn@charlottenc.gov

The City of Charlotte and the Charlotte Chamber are partnering to host an Access to Capital for Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs Summit at the Charlotte Convention Center on June 29 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. The purpose of the summit is to provide small businesses and entrepreneurs the opportunity to learn how to prepare for and connect with financial institutions to access capital.

The summit includes panels of local entrepreneurs, small business owners and capital providers

INFORMATION (continued):

who will discuss their businesses and how they have raised capital. In the afternoon, participants will have the opportunity for one-on-one meetings with representatives from national and state commercial banks, community banks, credit unions, venture capitalists and angel investors.

As part of the partnership, the City is offering a 50% discount on the $50 registration fee to City certified SBEs and businesses located in the Business Corridor geography. The City will also be taping portions of the conference to prepare a video that will be placed on its website and/or broadcast on the gov.channel 16.

For more details about the conference and to register to attend, please go to: www.charlottechamber.com/CapitalSummit.

Mint Street Conversion Project
Staff resource: Johanna Quinn, CDOT, 704-336-5606, jquinn@ci.charlotte.nc.us

As part of the annual resurfacing program, staff is preparing to convert the section of Mint Street between West Boulevard and Morehead Street from a four-lane road to a two-lane street with bike lanes and dedicated on-street parking on one side only (west side). The resurfacing of Mint Street is planned for mid-July. To accommodate stakeholders concerns, the bike lane on the east side of Mint Street, between Kingston and Westwood, will act as a parking lane on Sundays and Wednesday evenings. Currently, parking is permitted in the travel lanes during these times.

CDOT staff reviews all streets scheduled for resurfacing to identify opportunities to improve the level of service for all surface transportation modes (i.e. motor vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians and transit). Streets identified for such improvements have lower traffic volumes and sufficient width to provide for alternate uses, such as bicycle lanes and/or on-street parking, while sufficiently maintaining both current and future traffic operations. Staff identified Mint Street as a good candidate for such a conversion. This new Mint Street configuration is consistent with the South End Transit Area Plan and the South End Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity Plan.

City staff held several public meetings as a part of the South End Transit Area Planning process. Area residents and business owners were given the opportunity to offer their input at that time. In February 2010, CDOT held another meeting to remind residents of the City's plans. Response to the February meeting was generally positive.

ATTACHMENTS:

May 25 Economic Development Committee Meeting Summary
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