Council-Manager Memo #72
Friday, September 24, 2010

CHARLOTTE.

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WEEK IN REVIEW:

Mon (Sept 27)	Tues (Sept 28)	Wed (Sept 29)	Thurs (Sept 30)	Friday (Oct 1)
3:45 PM CANCELLED Environment Committee, Room 280 5:00 PM Council Business Meeting, Room 267 6:30 PM Citizens' Forum, Meeting Chamber			12:00 PM Restructuring Government Committee, Room CH-14	5:00 PM Mint Museum Uptown Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony, 500 S. Tryon St.

CALENDAR DETAILS:

Monday, September 27

3:45 pm **CANCELLED:** Environment Committee, Room 280

5:00 pm Council Business Meeting, Room 267

6:30 pm Citizens' Forum, Meeting Chamber

Thursday, September 30

12:00 pm Restructuring Government Committee, Room CH-14
AGENDA: Executive compensation policy; Water/sewer rate study; Technology improvements at the dais

Friday, October 1

5:00 pm Mint Museum Uptown Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony, 500 S. Tryon St.

September and October calendars are attached. ***(see left side table of contents)***

AGENDA NOTES:

Agenda Item #12 – Johnston and Mecklenburg Mills Disposition Process
Staff Resource: Patrick T. Mumford, N&BS, 704-336-5612, pmumford@charlottenc.gov

Item #12 on the September 27 Council Agenda outlines a disposition process for the Johnston and Mecklenburg Mills. In order to convey title to the property without third party encumbrances, staff has been working with the North Carolina Railroad to resolve existing minor encroachments of the mill buildings into the North Carolina Railroad right-of-way.

Discussions with the railroad have progressed to the point where staff hopes to initiate the disposition process in the next thirty to forty five days. In the meantime, Neighborhood & Business Service staff is preparing the site for sale. The preparation includes the following actions:

- Demolishing the Boxing Academy building from the site – the Boxing Academy is located in the NW corner of the site. The building straddles three parcels, one owned by the City, one owned by Norfolk Southern and one owned by North Carolina Railroad. Both Norfolk Southern and North Carolina Railroad have indicated they will not permit rehabilitation and reuse of the building on their properties. Demolition of the building moves the process closer to removing the third party encumbrances. The City has been issued a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Landmarks Commission, approving the demolition of the building.
- Re-securing the buildings – After weekly inspections of the site, it has been determined that additional security measures need to be taken to discourage entry into the buildings. As a result staff is:

- Boarding any broken windows
- Fencing the area around each building (except for the Boxing Academy)
- Removing brush on the site for improved visual inspection

After Council agrees upon a disposition process for the property and all railroad encroachment issues are resolved, staff will implement the disposition process as soon as practicable.

INFORMATION:

Charlotte Streetcar Project

Staff Resource: John Mrzygod, E&PM, 704-336-2245, jmrzygod@charlottenc.gov

The FY10 capital budget included funds to advance the design of the 10-mile streetcar project. The project would connect the Rosa Parks Community Transit Center to the future Gateway Station, Charlotte Transportation Center and Eastland Community Transit Center via Beatties Ford Road, Trade Street, Elizabeth Avenue, Hawthorne Lane and Central Avenue. Final public meetings will be held next week. Staff will inform the public of the progress made during the 30% design phase and introduce the starter segment made possible by the FTA Urban Circulator Grant.

The dates, times, and locations of the three public meetings are below:

- September 28 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Memorial United Methodist Church, 4012 Central Avenue
- September 30 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Jane M. Smith Memorial Church, JCSU
- October 5 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in Room 267, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center

Advancing the project to a 30% design level allows the City to not only further develop and refine the project, but help define how the streetcar corridor can integrate with existing neighborhoods and future development. The 30% design provides the following benefits:

- Advance the design work to be more ready for implementation and take advantage of future grants
- Study of underground and overhead utilities that may be affected by the streetcar infrastructure
- Develop guidelines for new utility modification or construction so that they would be consistent with streetcar design
- Further definition of the cost of utility changes necessary with streetcar construction
- Alignment and stop locations for coordination with redevelopment along the corridor
- Evaluate the future of vehicle technologies
- Verify or modify the total project cost

Open Houses Scheduled to Show Drafts of New Floodplain Maps

Staff Resource: Jennifer Smith, E&PM, 704-336-7924, jgsmith@charlottenc.gov

Mecklenburg County staff of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services have completed draft floodplain maps for the Little Sugar Creek and Briar Creek Watersheds. This fall, residents can attend public meetings to see internet versions of the draft maps and talk with Storm Water Services employees about their individual flood risks. Residents can also view the draft maps online and send comments and questions electronically to staff.

All Charlotte-Mecklenburg floodplain maps are being updated over the next seven years. Approximately $1.1 million in County Storm Water fees is being used to leverage $2 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to remap floodplains across the county.

Current local maps are based on 1997 data. Over time, flood risks change due to natural and manmade factors such as land development and shifting climate patterns. The technology used to gather data, calculate flood risks and create the maps also changes over time.

New technology is also being used to help the public understand what the revised floodplain maps mean to them. Internet versions of the new maps show more than just how wide the floodwater will spread in a one-percent chance ("100 year") flood. The 3D Interactive Floodzone Maps also show how deep the floodwater is expected to get. And, with a click of the mouse, the new computerized maps can be changed to show how a property's flood risk varies from a common rainfall event to an extremely rare flood. Increased awareness and understanding of flood risks can help residents take action to reduce the risk to lives and property.

Maintaining accurate floodplain maps is an investment in public safety. Storm Water Services' Flood Mitigation program uses floodplain maps to prioritize properties for floodplain buyouts, regulate new development, expand the local flood notification system for emergency responders, and target flood safety information. Floodplain mapping data also influences local environmental projects. And within two years, the maps will become part of the Flood Insurance Rate Maps used in flood insurance determinations.

The draft maps show approximately 1,150 structures in the Briar and Little Sugar Creek floodplains. Based on the draft maps, the number of properties required to have flood insurance may decrease by about 250. The number of structures regulated by local floodplain ordinances may decrease by about 670.

Open house meetings to show the draft floodplain maps for Little Sugar and Briar Watersheds will be held:

- September 30 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Hal Marshall County Services Center
- October 5 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at The Hut meeting center in Pineville

Drawing new floodplain maps for other Charlotte-Mecklenburg watersheds will continue through 2014 with the local and federal approval process to continue until about 2017. Remapping priority is based on each watershed's current and projected risk of flood damage, including the number of at-risk buildings along each creek.

Urban Street Design Guidelines Recognized by FHWA and FTA
Staff Resource: Danny Pleasant, CDOT, 704-336-3879, dpleasant@charlottenc.gov

Every two years, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conduct their Transportation Planning Excellence Award (TPEA) program. In 2010, the two federal agencies, in conjunction with the American Planning Association, selected the City of Charlotte's Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) for an Honorable Mention. Award winners and honorable mentions will be featured in an upcoming brochure to be posted on the TPEA website (www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/awards.htm).

The TPEA Program is intended to "…recognize outstanding initiatives across the country to develop, plan, and implement innovative transportation planning practices." The City is receiving this Honorable Mention for the implementation of the USDG, which has been ongoing through CIP projects, area plans, and some conditional rezonings. The USDG, adopted by Council in 2007, are being implemented to provide a connected network of complete streets for a growing and changing city. USDG implementation will continue with updates to various local ordinances scheduled for public hearing on November 15.

City Staff to be Featured in "Wilson's World" Segment
Staff Resource: Linda Durrett, CDOT, 704-336-3902, ldurrett@charlottenc.gov

CDOT's Pedestrian Program is continuing to inform and educate Charlotte citizens about the importance of sidewalks, crosswalks and how the City is working to create a safer, more comfortable walking environment. On Tuesday, September 28, the program will be featured on *FoxNews Rising* "Wilson's World". Staff from CDOT, CMPD, Mecklenburg County, UNCC, and pedestrian advocates will speak about pedestrian safety issues, the benefits of walking and their experiences walking along and across the street.

August 25 Metropolitan Transit Commission Meeting Summary
Staff Resource: Carolyn Flowers, CATS, 704-336-3855, cflowers@charlottenc.gov

At the meeting on Wednesday, September 22, 2010, the MTC had one public hearing, two action items and two information items on the agenda:

Public Hearing on the Blue Line Extension (BLE) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
Six individuals spoke at the Public Hearing for the BLE Draft EIS, all in support of the project to extend the current light rail system on the planned alignment. Representatives from UNC Charlotte, Casto Properties and CMC-University spoke of CATS' collaboration to minimize impacts to their operations and stated their commitment to light rail as a favorable transit alternative for the region. A representative from University City Partners stated that they have studied the Draft EIS and are comfortable with its findings. Two citizens also spoke in favor of building the light rail extension as quickly as feasible. Comments from the public hearing will be summarized for the October MTC meeting for action on the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) Preferred Alternative.

Red Line Task Force Update

The Red Line Task Force held its first meeting on September 22. Topics of discussion included a planning session with Paul Morris from NCDOT, establishing relationships with neighboring counties, meeting with Norfolk Southern, public/private partnerships, and creative financing.

Advertising Policy

In a 5-4 vote, the MTC approved the advertising policy recommendation. The approval expands potential areas of advertising to include exterior revenue vehicles (with the exception of STS/Vanpools, Sprinter buses, and trolleys), transit centers, schedules, and mobile technology such as phone apps and Wi-Fi networks. The previous policy allowed advertising only in the interior of revenue vehicles and at rapid transit and trolley stations including kiosks and displays and on ticket stock. CATS will now pursue advertising opportunities in the new areas.

November Workshop Agenda

MTC approved scheduling a workshop on November 17, 2010, at the Lee S. Duke Charlotte Mecklenburg Utility facility in Huntersville from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The workshop will take the place of the regularly-scheduled meeting. The agenda for the workshop will include a review of the MTC 2030 Plan that was approved in 2006, the impact of the 2009 recession on revenue assumptions, and strategies for moving transit forward.

Economic Value Added Study

MTC has asked CATS staff to perform an Economic Value Added (EVA) study on transit corridors. The recent Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) application recently submitted for the North Corridor was a cost-benefit analysis, an approach which may help MTC members evaluate various aspects of transit corridors. MTC members agreed that the level of detail in that report would be helpful.

2011 MTC Legislative Agenda

As the economy has contracted, there has been a move to obtain an increased federal share of projects that have demonstrated elements in support of local land use, ridership, economic development, and high community impact. The recession has eroded the local transit sales tax so that it is insufficient to finance the local share of major capital projects. However, the recession has also strained the capabilities of federal and state funds to fill the gap. The 2011 Legislative Agenda will build on efforts from 2010 to communicate with members of federal and state congressional delegations and staff to find sources of federal and state funding for transit projects.

CEO Report

Under the CEO's report, Carolyn Flowers discussed the following:

a. **Reports**:
   MTC members received the FY2010 Annual Management Report. Ridership declined in FY2010 due to the economy and lower gas prices. This is the only area that was

not attained on the Balanced Scorecard. CATS exceeded all Financial Performance objectives in FY2010, as staff worked to adjust expenses to match lowered revenue. MTC members also received the FY2011 Transit Operating Program and the FY2011-2020 Capital Investment Plan.

b. **Countywide Service Plan review**:
Staff will begin public meetings this month to review and update the countywide service plan. At the Stockholders' Meetings this summer, there was a lot of discussion on east-west and cross-town connections, which will be included in the countywide service plan review.

c. **Route 34**:
MTC members were presented with a petition at the August meeting signed by 400 people to add Sunday service to Route 34. CATS had applied for a job access reverse commute grant to extend service on that route. The grant was awarded. Sunday service will resume on Route 34 on October 3.

d. **Transit Tax Revenue**:
July transit tax revenues were $4.7 million, a decrease from June's revenue. CATS had estimated budget conservatively and was still able to make budget for the month. Staff will continue to monitor revenues to determine the general trend in revenues over time.

The next MTC meeting will be October 27, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

September 7 Community Safety Committee Summary ***(see left side table of contents)***