Council-Manager Memo #73
Friday, September 30, 2011

CHARLOTTE.

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WEEK IN REVIEW:

Mon (Oct. 3)	Tues (Oct. 4)	Wed (Oct. 5)	Thurs (Oct. 6)	Friday (Oct. 7)
5:00 PM Council Workshop, Room 267 7:30 PM Citizens' Forum, Room 267				

CALENDAR DETAILS:

Monday, October 3

5:00 pm Council Workshop, Room 267

7:30 pm Citizens' Forum, Room 267

October and November calendars are attached (see "2. Calendar.pdf").

AGENDA NOTES:

Workshop Agenda

Staff Resource: Jim Schumacher, City Manager's Office, 704-336-3656, jschumacher@charlottenc.gov

Attached (see "3. Workshop Agenda.pdf") please find a revised Workshop Agenda to accommodate Secretary Conti's availability. He will make the presentation on Interstate 77 North. Staff has moved his presentation to first on the agenda to allow him to attend as well as be part of the discussion on Independence Boulevard/ULI Rose Fellowship.

INFORMATION:

October 1 - 50th Anniversary of Fire Station 12 Celebration

Staff Resource: Rich Granger, Fire, 704-336-8802, rgranger@charlottenc.gov

The Fire Department will be hosting the 50th Anniversary of Fire Station 12 on Saturday, October 1, 2011. This is the first in a series of events scheduled to take place during October, which is Fire Prevention Month. The station will be open for tours, and "Blaze" and the firefighters from Station 12 will greet the public and distribute fire & life safety information. Additionally, members of the community will have the opportunity to get an up close look at Engine 12, as well as some of CFD's antique apparatus. CFD hopes that Council and citizens will be able to join the celebration.

Location: Fire Station 12
420 Inwood Drive
Charlotte, NC 28210

When: Saturday, October 1, 2011
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Parking: Please use the Home Depot parking lot located at 4750 South Blvd. Assistance crossing South Blvd will be provided.

TIGER 3 Funding - Bicycle and Pedestrian Application Update
Staff Resource: Dan Gallagher, CDOT 704-336-4984, dgallagher@charlottenc.gov

On August 22, 2011, City Council authorized staff to submit an application to compete for funds from the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER 3) grant program. The City envisioned submitting an application for bicycle and pedestrian projects to accelerate the implementation of the City's Bicycle Plan and Transportation Action Plan.

In late August, staff learned that the Carolina Thread Trail and Mecklenburg County were also applying for TIGER 3 funding for similar projects. To strengthen the application, City staff has collaborated with the Carolina Thread Trail, Mecklenburg County Greenways and the Centralina Council of Governments to submit a joint application for TIGER 3 funding. The projects included in the application will greatly expand the bicycle and pedestrian travel network in Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and Cabarrus County. In addition, several of the proposed projects will increase connectivity to the Lynx Blue Line and Blue Line Extension.

Staff will work with the City's grant application partners to jointly submit pre-application materials by October 3, 2011 and a final application by the October 31, 2011 deadline.

Wayfinding and Parking Guidance System Update
Staff Resource: Vivian Coleman, CDOT, 704-336-4275, vcoleman@charlottenc.gov

Starting September 30, 2011, CDOT will begin testing Uptown Wayfinding and Parking Guidance System signs. All signs should be activated within 45 days, with testing likely to extend beyond this period. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, the system should become fully operational by the first of the year.

The Wayfinding and Parking Guidance System signs include a distinctive "P" parking sign with a blue lighted background, and are intended to provide visitors and residents real time parking information at parking decks. In addition, five gateway signs entering Uptown from the freeway system will start operations and include a variety of messages. Initial testing will show 'Sign Under Test'.

September 28 Metropolitan Transit Commission Meeting Summary
Staff Resource: Carolyn Flowers, CATS, 704-336-3855, cflowers@charlottenc.gov

At its meeting on Wednesday, September 28, 2011, the MTC had no action items scheduled and heard five information items:

Federal Legislative Update
MTC members received an overview of the current federal legislative climate. Legislators are studying ways to reduce deficits. The President is also concerned with creating jobs, and has proposed $50 billion for transportation spending to promote jobs creation. The focus of these funds is on projects that can be completed soon and create jobs quickly. There is no funding for

New Starts money in this bill, although support for New Starts funding continues to be strong. The Blue Line Extension (BLE) is included in the President's budget and North Carolina's congressional delegation has stated their continued support for the project. Due to economic constraints, federal FY2012 funding levels for most transportation-related programs are slated to be frozen at or lower than federal FY2011 funding.

2012 Federal Legislative Agenda
MTC's 2012 Legislative Agenda should encourage a robust, sustainable and reliable source of federal funding for the 2012 Federal Surface Transportation Program, as the gasoline tax is insufficient. The Agenda will include encouraging tolling, public-private partnerships and sustained funding for the New Starts/Small Starts program. CATS will seek funding to procure right-of-way for the BLE project and approval for the BLE to enter Final Design, with the goal of an executed Full Funding Grant Agreement by the end of 2012. MTC members are encouraged to attend the US Conference of Mayors in Washington, DC, in January 2012, and to visit the NC General Assembly next May to encourage support at the state level.

Red Line Task Force (RLTF) Policy Recommendations
Paul Morris has acted as a consultant on the Red Line Task Force and was recently appointed Deputy Secretary for Transit at NCDOT. He reported that the corridor emphasis has evolved from a commuter rail corridor with limited freight capacity to a dual-benefit corridor, moving goods and people using regional economic development strategies that will encourage both Freight and Transit Oriented Development (FOD and TOD) along the corridor. The RLTF provisionally approved four recommendations in August:

1. The Red Line Rail Project (RLRP) should be treated as a regional economic development initiative.
2. The RLRP should pursue a dual-benefit strategy.
3. A unified district should be established to provide regional benefit and allocation, administered through a Joint Powers Authority.
4. The state should take a leadership role in the RLRP.

North Carolina DOT Prioritization Process
Staff provided background on NCDOT's Strategic Prioritization Process and presented the Transit Prioritization 2.0 list to MTC. The list comes from documents previously approved by MTC. The ranking of the projects is based first on system operation/preservation and then on expansion. The same list will appear before MTC next month for approval.

Urban Land Institute (ULI) – Daniel Rose Fellowship Program
The ULI Rose Fellowship Program chose Charlotte as one of four cities for study this year. Charlotte asked the Program's assistance in defining how to implement the Independence Boulevard Area Plan (IBAP). Key ULI recommendations were to be clear about the difference between solutions for regional challenges versus local challenges and to build on what works. The Task Force concluded that Independence Boulevard alone cannot meet all needs for regional travel, local trips, access to commercial properties and also provide stimulus for new TOD. With this in mind, the Task Force's refinements to current plans were:

1. Construct Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Express bus service on Independence in High Occupancy Travel (HOT) lanes. A combined busway/HOT lane reduces right of way requirements as no barrier is required for an exclusive busway. HOT lanes with congestion pricing will keep traffic moving while also providing a revenue stream.
2. Construct streetcar on both Central Avenue and Monroe Road to support new residential and commercial development on a neighborhood scale.
3. Promote auto-oriented retail on Independence and neighborhood-serving, mixed-use development on the streetcar lines.

The Task Force's recommendation that Independence Boulevard incorporate HOT lanes with the busway would require MTC to rescind the 2006 Transit System Plan provision directing preservation of the ability to construct future light rail or BRT in an exclusive busway. Streetcar on Monroe Road would require a study to determine the optimum alignment.

CATS CEO Report

Under the CEO's report, Carolyn Flowers discussed:

a. **Service Changes**:
   Beginning Monday, October 3, route 61X Arboretum Express will be extended to the Valerie C. Woodard Center. The extension will be funded through a Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant. A few other routes will also have changes.
b. **Financial Update**:
   Staff has negotiated several procurements recently, including a Real Estate Acquisition Consultant and renewal of the federal legislative services agreement. July sales tax receipts were $1 million higher than budgeted. Despite the July upturn, it will be necessary to do a mid-year budget adjustment as other sources of funding have been reduced. CATS will have to add additional services to STS to maintain federally-mandated services levels. Ridership increased slightly last month.
c. **Labor Negotiations**:
   A tentative labor agreement with UTU was reached last week. Staff hopes the agreement will be ratified next week.
d. **Light Rail Incident Update**:
   The pedestrian involved in last week's light rail incident has improved sufficiently and she was interviewed by media today. She does not remember details of the incident. CATS video shows her carrying an umbrella which may have obstructed her view of the oncoming train. The operator exercised all correct procedures.
e. **Business Opportunity Symposium**:
   CATS will host an outreach on September 29 to inform businesses of upcoming procurement opportunities and provide information on how to work within federal requirements for CATS projects such as the BLE and other City departments.
f. **Red Line Task Force Status**:
   A briefing on the RLTF status will be presented at 10:00 a.m. on October 27, 2011. The meeting will be at the CPCC North campus in Huntersville. Since Council and Legislative members are invited, each town and City should provide their own notice of the meeting. CATS will also post a meeting notice on its website.

Other Business
Staff informed MTC members that CATS's advertising agency estimated today that advertising demand will soon exceed space available on rail vehicles and local and express buses. MTC members unanimously approved to add, and then unanimously approved the motion to change the Advertising Policy to allow advertising on all revenue vehicles, including those originally excluded in the Advertising Policy such as Sprinter, vanpool and Gold Rush vehicles.

The next MTC meeting will be October 26, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.

STIMULUS INFORMATION:

EECBG Electric Vehicle and Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Pilot Project
Staff Resources: Rob Phocas, City Manager's Office, 704-336-7558, rphocas@charlottenc.gov
David Smith, E&PM, 704-336-4626, dbsmith@charlottenc.gov

As part of the $6.78 million Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG), the City of Charlotte is preparing to launch a pilot project designed to encourage the use of alternatively powered vehicles. The Electric Vehicle and Electric Vehicle Charging Stations project will launch this fall.

The first component of the project will be the installation of twenty-nine electric vehicle charging stations at nine locations throughout the community. This component of the project was developed in conjunction with community partners, including Duke Energy and Charlotte Center City Partners. The locations of the charging stations were strategically chosen to aid commuters who own electric vehicles.

The second component, the purchase of electric vehicles, will add seven all-electric Nissan Leafs and one hybrid electric Chevrolet Volt to the City's fleet. Based on other cities' experience with these electric vehicles to date, it is anticipated that the City will reduce fuel and maintenance costs as well as use less fossil fuel and emit fewer harmful greenhouse gas emissions. These vehicles will also allow staff to evaluate the cost/benefit of electric vehicles and determine if electric vehicles are viable alternatives for future changes to the City's fleet. Staff will seek Council approval for the purchase of the Nissan Leafs at the October 10 Business Meeting.

Both projects demonstrate the City is leading by example in environmental initiatives. A memo containing more detailed information on each project is **attached (see "4. EECBG projects.pdf").**

ATTACHMENTS:

City Council Follow-Up Report **(see "5. Council Follow Up.pdf")**

Contents Include:
--Sharon Road Vehicle Accidents

September 12 Governmental Affairs Committee Summary **(see "6. GAC Summary.pdf")**