Council-Manager Memo #27
Wednesday, April 4, 2012

CHARLOTTE.

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WEEK IN REVIEW:

Mon (April 9)	Tues (April 10)	Wed (April 11)	Thurs (April 12)	Fri (April 13)
2:30 PM Transportation and Planning Committee, Room 280 4:00 PM Council Business Meeting, Room 267		12:00 PM Housing and Neighborhood Development Committee, Room 280 3:00 PM Council Budget Retreat, Room 267		

CALENDAR DETAILS:

Monday, April 9

2:30 pm Transportation and Planning Committee, Room 280
AGENDA: Bike share update; Managed lanes phase 3 and I-77 high occupancy toll lanes update

4:00 pm Council Business Meeting, Room 267

Wednesday, April 11

12:00 pm Housing and Neighborhood Development Committee, Room 280
AGENDA: Quality of life study; Charlotte Housing Authority choice voucher program update

3:00 pm Council Budget Retreat, Room 267

April and May calendars are attached (see "2. Calendar.pdf").

AGENDA NOTES:

Dinner Briefings - Consent Agenda Questions and Answers
Staff Resource: Julie Burch, City Manager's Office, 704-336-3187, jburch@charlottenc.gov

On March 26, the City Council decided to discontinue the Noon Council Agenda Briefings. With that change, Dinner Briefing Agendas will once again allow time for Council members to ask questions about Consent Agenda Items at the beginning of the meeting. The last item on the dinner agenda will provide time for staff to answer those questions.

Staff hopes this helps Council's time be used as productively as possible and minimize the number of Consent Items that may need to be pulled at the meeting. Pulled items will be held for action until the end of the meeting, the procedure in place since January.

INFORMATION:

City Energy Programs Nationally and Locally Recognized
Staff Resources: Rob Phocas, City Manager's Office, 704-336-7558, rphocas@charlottenc.gov
Nicole Storey, N&BS, 704-336-2929, nrstorey@charlottenc.gov

Historic South End Chosen for Participation in Portland Eco-District Institute
City staff from Neighborhood & Business Services and representatives from Charlotte Center City Partners/SouthEnd have been selected to participate in the Portland Oregon Sustainability

Institute (POSI) Eco-District Institute. The EcoDistrict Institute is a peer learning workshop that brings together experts in neighborhood planning, urban design, green infrastructure, and public policy to present global best practices related to neighborhood/district sustainability.

The training will take place in Portland, OR May 8 – 10. Potential strategies to be evaluated include farmers' market expansion, community gardens, bike and car share programs, district energy including solar photovoltaic and geothermal heat, green financing, residential and business recycling and composting, multifamily eco-concierges and green amenities for apartment and condominium communities. SouthEnd was selected for the program due to community interest in establishing an EcoDistrict and SouthEnd staff's ability to implement sustainability strategies.

City's Community Energy Conservation Coordinator wins Community Sustainability Award
Sustain Charlotte, a nonprofit environmental advocacy organization, recognized 70 Charlotte area citizens and presented awards to 12 at their First Annual Community Sustainability Awards on Saturday, March 31. Nicole Storey, Energy Coordinator for Neighborhood & Business Services, was presented the first ever Community Sustainability Award in the Buildings and Homes category. Nicole was recognized for her leadership in managing the Commercial Building Retrofit Program (CBRetro), Neighborhood Energy Challenge (NEC), Power2 Live Green, The Green Neighborhood Assessment Tool (component of the Quality of Life Study), and the Better Buildings Program.

Charlotte Receives 2012 Siemens Sustainable Community Award Honorable Mention
The Siemens Sustainable Community Awards program provides a national platform for recognition of organizations that have taken steps to improve quality of life, steward the environment, and increase the ability to sustain a successful community for future generations. The program received over 130 applications from 40 different states. The City of Charlotte, the only city recognized in the Carolinas, received an Honorable Mention for its sustainability efforts. The City will be formally recognized for its accomplishments at the US Chamber of Commerce's Business & Civic Leadership Conference in Atlanta April 16-18.

April 20 – CMPD Promotion Ceremony
Staff Resource: Chief Rodney Monroe, CMPD, 704-336-2337, rmonroe@cmpd.org

Council is invited to join CMPD at a promotion ceremony on Friday April 20 at 10:00 a.m. at the Police and Fire Training Academy at 1770 Shopton Road. A reception will follow the ceremony.

CMPD will celebrate the promotions of eight of its personnel.

- To the Rank of Major: Captain Jeff Estes, Captain Johnny Jennings
- To the Rank of Captain: Lieutenant Jacquelyn Hulsey, Sergeant Benton Herring
- To the Rank of Lieutenant: Sergeant Thomas Gwaltney
- To the Rank of Sergeant: Officer Stephen Flatt, Officer Ryan Kendall, Officer Dondi Pogue

City Grants Awarded

Staff Resource: Aisha Alexander, N&BS, 704-904-2138, valexander@charlottenc.gov

The following information explains grant activity for three grant programs administered by Neighborhood & Business Services.

Neighborhood Matching Grants

Fifteen applications were submitted in the February cycle of the Neighborhood Matching Grants Program. Thirteen of the applications were approved for a total amount awarded of $161,519. Below is a listing of the neighborhoods who received funding:

Neighborhood	Amount	Project Description
Plaza Midwood (District 1)	$9,199	Cool Pool
Villa Heights (District 1)	$17,270	Cordelia Park Public Art
Greenville (District 2)	$9,406	Youth Band Program
*Historic West End** (District 2)	$50,000	Branding Initiative
Hyde Park (District 2	$5,600	Neighborhood Entrance Sign
Third Ward (District 2)	$9,478	Neighborhood Identification Signs
Farmhurst (District 3)	$7,509	Organizational Development
Steele Oaks-Braddock Green (District 3)	$1,801	Neighborhood Streetlights
Becton Park (District 5)	$7,207	Neighborhood Signage & Fencing
McCarron (District 5)	$14,260	Entryway Enhancements
Winterfield (District 5)	$3,289	Neighborhood Celebration/Concert
Apple Tree Village (District 6)	$25,000	Community Beautification
Selwyn Park (District 6)	$1,500	Organizational Development
	$161,519	

** Includes a collaboration of three neighborhoods: Garden Park, Eleanor Heights, and Lincoln Heights that each received $16,667.*

How Does Your Garden G.R.O.? Grants

Keep Charlotte Beautiful (KCB) announced the *How Does Your Garden G.R.O.(*Green Restores Our…)*? Grant* in January, 2012. The initiative provides Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) up to $5,000 to establish gardens on school grounds providing beautification and educational opportunities for the students. Applicants submitted a video up to five minutes long featuring the students telling KCB what students, parents and teachers are doing to help keep Charlotte beautiful, as well as a written application explaining the need and impact of a garden for the school and community. The KCB Board received and reviewed 27 applications from middle and elementary schools, exceeding expectations for this first time grant offering. The following schools were awarded grants:

- Albemarle Road Elementary (District 5) - $3,000

- Chantilly Montessori (District 1) - $1,000
- Mountain Island Elementary (District 2) - $1,000

Each school's video submission may be viewed at the Keep Charlotte Beautiful website: http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/kcb/Pages/HowDoesYourGardenGROGrant.aspx

Adopt a Neighborhood Grants
Adopt a Neighborhood, Keep Charlotte Beautiful's signature beautification program, was created to fund small beautification projects that enhance the quality of life in Charlotte neighborhoods. While there is no cost for neighborhoods to participate, neighbors must volunteer to maintain the project after completion. The 2012 Adopt-a-Neighborhood Grant recipients are:

- Coulwood (District 2) - $4,200: The project includes the development of a Community Garden/Nature Park for children and a Butterfly and Bird Sanctuary. The project also provides ADA accommodations for disabled residents and children.
- Cannonbridge Subdivision (District 2) - $800: The beautification project includes plants and bushes at the entrance to the community. Lowe's will partner with the community by providing material at discounted costs.

Public Involvement Activities for Charlotte Region Managed Lanes Study Phase 3
Staff Resources: Tim Gibbs, CDOT, 704-336-3917, tgibbs@charlottenc.gov
Norm Steinman, CDOT, 704-336-3939, nsteinman@charlottenc.gov

The public involvement effort for Phase 3 of the Regional Managed (Fast) Lanes Study will begin in April when the consultant team will conduct interviews of key stakeholders, focus groups and a random sample telephone survey. The interviewees will include elected officials, business leaders and persons representing other advocacy and interest groups. There will be three focus groups. One will include persons who travel on I-485 South; another, persons who travel on US 74 East; and the third, persons who travel on I-77 North. The telephone survey will include a random sample of households in Mecklenburg County.

The results of the interviews, focus groups and the household sample surveys will be shared with Council in late spring. That information will be used to develop recommendations about High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes in priority corridors.

Council's Transportation and Planning Committee will receive an update on the Managed Lanes study this month.

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

At its meeting on Wednesday, March 28, 2012, the MTC had no action items and heard three information items.

Fare Increase Public Hearing
The regular meeting was preceded by a public hearing on a proposed fare increase of 25 cents to the base fare, a 14.3% increase to fund 28,178 revenue service hours. Since 2005, fuel costs, risk and medical insurance expenses have risen dramatically while sales tax income was reduced. Staff has taken measures to balance the budget. Nineteen people made comments during the Public Hearing. Eighteen were opposed to the increase, citing concerns about the impact of an increase on lower-income transit-dependent riders. Speakers also cited concerns about customer service issues, timely transfers between buses or between bus and rail and expressed other route scheduling concerns.

Red Line Task Force Update
The Red Line Task Force is finishing the 90-day review and analysis of the business plan and engaging with Norfolk Southern (NS) to understand and implement engineering studies NS has requested in order to update and review future line operations. The second phase of the project will be deferred to give time for the NS study. The Task Force also discussed an additional station proposed in Charlotte and Mooresville's request to move the Mt. Mourne station. These recommendations will be directed to MTC for discussion and possible action.

LYNX Blue Line Extension Light Rail Project (BLE) Update
The BLE, an extension of the existing Blue Line, is scheduled for implementation in 2017. The project includes improvements to North Tryon Street. The project is FTA approved and was the only rail project included in President Obama's FY2013 budget. The CATS share of the project's $1.16 billion budget will be financed with the half-cent sales tax. The project will have 11 stations including 4 park and rides, and will accommodate 3-car trains. The project has completed the 65% level of design. FTA has awarded the project a Medium High rating for the FY2013 New Starts Financial Assessment. FTA issued the Record of Decision in December 2011, and right of way acquisition has begun. Following a Risk Assessment Workshop in January 2012 with FTA's Project Management Oversight Consultant, CATS updated the project's cost and schedule. The next step is FTA approval to enter the Final Design phase. Project scope changes had lowered the project's cost but financing charges and local right of way credits increased the cost. Additionally, costs were added during the Risk Assessment. The cost for the bridge for the 36th Street Freight Relocation will be shared with FTA and the State of North Carolina. The finance plan will be tight but required cash reserves and debt service coverage ratios will be maintained within financial policy parameters.

FY2013-17 Transit Capital Investment Plan (CIP)
The five-year CIP focuses on a balanced financial strategy to promote sustainability and allow growth. Key capital expenditures include advancing the BLE into Final Design and Construction; procurement of buses, paratransit and vanpool vehicles; a 5-year overhaul of light rail vehicles; asset maintenance; debt service expense retirement and addition of two new debt service issuances projected for FY2013 and FY2015. The BLE will include multiple funding partners such as FTA, NCDOT and the City of Charlotte. Other funding sources for the CIP will include federal and state grants, the CATS operating fund balance and other miscellaneous sources.

New Starts Update
The New Starts Program is the major source of funding for projects such as the Blue Line and BLE. FTA has issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that will affect eligibility and ratings of New and Small Starts Projects. CATS submitted comments on the Proposed Rule. The goals of the Proposed Rule were to measure a wider range of benefits provided by transit projects and establish measures to streamline the process. Projects already in Preliminary Engineering were exempt, so the BLE will continue under the old rule, although future CATS corridors would be subject to the new rules. The proposed rule changes mean that light rail and bus rapid transit will remain competitive. Streetcar may be more competitive. Commuter rail is eligible, but will likely remain non-competitive.

CATS CEO Report
Under the CEO's report, Carolyn Flowers discussed:

a. **Red Line Financial Plan**:
   CATS staff has prepared a response on the Red Line Financial Plan consistent with scenarios presented in the 2010 Workshop. Staff made a statement about support for the Red Line project and how it contributes to the region and the shared vision of incorporating Public Private Partnerships to create sustainable financing. CATS needs three things in order to be able to participate in the project with a 25 percent share in the construction and operation of the project. The project must be subject to a detailed engineering and design study in order to determine a probable cost and schedule. CATS will coordinate with NCDOT to ensure this is done. Secondly, the owner of the railroad, NS, must be designated as a working partner. Thirdly, CATS' contribution to the capital and operating cost are based on CATS retaining all of the commuter rail fare and incremental FTA commuter rail funds. This will enable CATS to repay any debt. The City will also perform a detailed review of CATS' financial policy and ability to perform the project. CATS must also have collateral such as stations or rolling stock to pay the debt.
b. **Legislative Agenda**:
   Ms. Flowers reported that she and Ms. Pereira attended the American Public Transportation Legislative Conference in March. They met with FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff, visited federal House staff and members of the Senate delegation to provide updates on the BLE and make comments on the proposed transportation reauthorization bill and impacts of amendments to the reauthorization. The Senate has passed a two-year reauthorization bill, but the House proposes a three-month extension of the current bill. Ms. Flowers also met with NC Representative Becky Carney with Dana Fenton, Intergovernmental Relations Manager with the City of Charlotte, about continued support for transit projects. Ms. Carney advised them not to expect much in the next session.

   The City of Charlotte proposes a four-cent increase in property taxes to support a $900 million CIP program that includes an extension of the streetcar project. This is included in MTC's 2030 Plan.

The next MTC meeting will be April 25, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

City Council Follow-Up Report **(see "3. FollowUp.pdf")**

Contents include:
--Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Compensation Plan

March 19 Environment Committee Summary **(see "4. EnvSummary.pdf")**