CHARLOTTE

City Council
Follow-Up Report

October 19, 2012

October 8, 2012 – City Council Business Meeting

Great Oaks Neighborhood Fence Request
Staff Resource: Tim Greene, Engineering & Property Management, 704-336-3649, tgreene@charlottenc.gov

During the meeting, Council member Barnes indicated that he recently attended a meeting of the Great Oaks Subdivision HOA, and the Board requested the City partially or wholly pay for the installation of a fence. The Board is concerned about the potential for crime in their neighborhood as a result of the City Boulevard Extension Project. Council member Barnes has requested that City staff provide a report on options to assist the Great Oaks neighborhood with a fence.

The $10.8 million City Boulevard Extension Project was approved by voters in 2008 to be constructed between Neal Road and Mallard Creek Road (Graham Street Extension Project by the NCDOT). The new roadway will provide access to the southernmost portion of University Research Park and complete a new east-west route between Derita and the University area. The project will include a four-lane, median-divided road with planting strips, sidewalks, street lighting and bike lanes. Construction is scheduled to begin by the end of second quarter 2013.

The design and installation of Transportation Capital Improvement Projects typically do not include walls or fences unless such items are removed or relocated for project construction.

One exception to this practice occurred as part of the City's 2004 Asbury Avenue Extension project (now known as Atando Avenue), which connected the industrial areas near Graham Street to the I-77 interchange at Lasalle Street. In that project, the City installed a decorative fence to buffer the Druid Hills neighborhood from the industrial traffic that would be using Atando Avenue. At the time, Druid Hills was classified as a "Challenged Neighborhood" under the Charlotte Neighborhood Quality of Life study and was "at risk" on multiple dimensions. It was decided to add a decorative fence to provide a partition between the neighborhood and the adjacent industrial traffic.

To address the concerns of Great Oaks Community, the City of Charlotte can provide the following assistance:

- **Neighborhood Matching Grants Program.** The program awards funds to eligible neighborhood-based organizations for projects that will make neighborhoods better places to live, work, play and shop. The goal is to help strengthen neighborhood organizations, while encouraging increased neighborhood participation and partnerships with the City and others. Organizations are required to match requested funds. The match must be directly related to the proposed project, and may be in the form of cash, volunteer labor or in-kind donations (equipment, supplies, professional services, etc.).

- **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).** The form and arrangement of buildings and open spaces can encourage or discourage crime. CPTED attempts to reduce crime and the fear of crime by reducing criminal opportunity and fostering positive social interaction among the users of a space. The Police Department is available to conduct a Security Survey of neighborhood homes.

- **Street Lighting**. The Project will provide standard street lighting on wooden poles along City Boulevard Extension. Visibility is a primary component of the CPTED program. Placing physical features, activities and people in ways that maximize the ability to see what's going on discourages crime. The visibility to a business or residence is increased by improving indoor and outdoor lighting; and illuminating all entrances, exits, and parking areas. The Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) has programs to assist residents with the installation of individual street lights and neighborhood street lights on local public streets.

- **Fencing.** Properly located entrances, exits, fencing and lighting can direct both foot and automobile traffic in ways that discourage crime. Access control denies or restricts access to a crime target, and it also increases the perceived risks of the offender by controlling or restricting their movement. However, as noted above, fencing is not a standard element of Transportation Capital Improvement Projects. The City can offer property owners non-monetary compensation of equal value to the land required for the project including, but not limited to fencing.

- **Landscaping.** This is a standard element of all Transportation Capital Improvement Projects. Landscaping provides natural buffers between thoroughfares and neighborhoods. Staff is available to work with the neighborhood to design street landscaping that accents the neighborhood.

- **Traffic calming.** If neighborhood streets meet required criteria, traffic calming devices may be installed. Requests for traffic calming should be directed to CDOT for evaluation and initiation; installation would occur independent of the City Boulevard Extension project.

Staff will meet with the Great Oaks Neighborhood to see which of the above programs they would like to initiate and will follow up with Council member Barnes and management staff on the outcome of discussions with the Great Oaks Neighborhood.