



**CHARLOTTE**<sup>SM</sup>

**City Council  
Follow-Up Report**

**May 10, 2013**

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**April 22, 2013 – City Council Business Meeting**

**Airport Involvement with Carolinas Aviation Museum**

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During the dinner briefing regarding the Airport Advisory Committee, Council member Andy Dulin asked for additional information on the aviation museum. Following is a summary of the aviation museum's history, operations, and fiscal terms associated with the airport.

**Museum History**

- 1992 - The Carolinas Historical Aviation Commission was founded. It is now named Carolinas Aviation Museum (CAM) and is a certified 501c3.
- April 1993 - City Council approved a month-to-month agreement to use the abandoned, original Southern Airways hangar at CLT to store and display their growing aircraft collection.
- January 2007 - Council approved a 20 year lease for 7.47 acres that included the use of the hangar and line building within the premises. The lease also included two offices in a nearby facility. The annual rate is \$1.

**Airport Activities and Support**

- For many years, CLT offered airport tours to approximately 12,000 students annually. The tour program was discontinued after 9-11 due to the change in federal security regulations which prevented access beyond the security checkpoint for non-travelers. Having the museum within the Airport complex proved to be of great benefit to CLT and provided an alternative to the former Airport Tour Program.
- October 2008 -Wells Fargo acquired Wachovia and attempted to sell their corporate aviation facility to SPX.
- June 2009 - City Council approved a lease assignment of the Wells Fargo corporate aviation facility to SPX. However, the SPX deal fell through when parties could not reach agreement on liability for ground water contamination and payment of fair market rent. CLT is currently negotiating with SPX for a different hangar.
- November 2009 - City Council approved the buyout of Wachovia's leasehold interests.
- March 2010 - City Council approved a contract to construct a new taxiway that would require the CAM hangar and line building to be moved. Meanwhile, CAM had acquired numerous exhibits and a significant membership and needed a place to store their collection while CLT constructed the taxiway. CAM was also negotiating with support from US Airways, Airbus, etc. during this time period to bring US Airways 1549 aircraft to Charlotte, which they later successfully secured.

- May 2010 - CLT signed a group hangar storage license for the empty Wells Fargo facilities with CAM. The terms are month-to-month with a \$1/month fee and all utilities to be paid by CAM, which means the facility remains available to anyone willing to pay fair market rent.

### **Other**

- Prior to CAM being established as a 501c3 and an accredited museum facility, the City Manager signed a “no money” loan agreement for two Air Force aircraft to be displayed at the museum. The last agreement CLT has copies of is dated 2011. It is our understanding that this agreement has been or will be transferred to the museum upon the signing of the next year’s agreement.
- The terms of the group hangar storage license agreement is consistent with other 501c3 entities operating at CLT – for example, USO.

### **Summary**

- CLT’s sole financial support of CAM is a reduced rent charge of \$1 per year for a hangar, line building and two offices and \$1 per month for the former Wells Fargo corporate facilities.

### **Steele Creek Road**

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During the April 22<sup>nd</sup> City Council meeting, Ms. Janie Turner, spoke about the need for a traffic signal at the intersection of Steele Creek Road and Branch Bend Lane. During Ms. Turner’s remarks, she expressed concern for the safety of pedestrians trying to cross the street at the location. Ms. Turner was a resident of the Steele Creek Senior Apartments located at the intersection.

This intersection is not unlike many in suburban Charlotte, and presents the City with pedestrian accessibility challenges. The roadway is currently designed to predominately serve vehicle traffic even though location has significant pedestrian activity between the apartments and transit stop. Steele Creek Road (NC 160) is state-maintained and carries approximately 21,000 vehicles per day. There is one travel lane in each direction and left turn lanes serving Branch Bend Lane. The posted speed limit is 45 mph and the predominant land uses are apartments and single-family residential subdivisions. Sidewalks are present on both sides of Steele Creek Road near the intersection with Branch Bend Lane. A CATS transit stop is located on the east side of Steele Creek Road across the street from the Steele Creek Senior Apartments.

Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) has evaluated this location for pedestrian crossings and determined a pedestrian refuge island and pedestrian warning signs are the preferred treatment. Pedestrians can cross Steele Creek Road in 2 stages using the refuge island allowing them to focus on traffic in one direction at a time. The pedestrian refuge is funded by the City and CDOT is currently designing the improvement. Pedestrian warning signs are already in place. CDOT plans to construct the island by late Fall 2013, depending on coordination time with the NCDOT.

A traffic signal was evaluated at this location but did not meet traffic signal warrants due to low volumes of traffic on Branch Bend Lane. During the observation period, the longest queue was four vehicles and at times there was no queue. On average vehicles making turn movements were delayed less than 30 seconds.

A similar request for pedestrian accommodations was made on Prosperity Church Road near Prosperity Creek Crossing. Conditions and land uses are similar along Prosperity Church Road compared to Steele Creek Road. An assisted living facility is located across the street from CATS transit stops. The main difference is Prosperity Church Road is a four-lane divided roadway and Steele Creek is a 2-lane roadway with center turn lanes. A pedestrian refuge island with accessible ramps was constructed on Prosperity Church Road in early April 2013. This pedestrian refuge also provides pedestrians the opportunity to cross the street in 2 stages, allowing the pedestrian to focus on one direction of travel at a time.

CDOT will coordinate with CMPD regarding speed enforcement along Steele Creek Road. City Council can also expect a comprehensive pedestrian report from the CDOT mid-May.

Staff will ensure that Ms. Turner receives a copy of this report.