

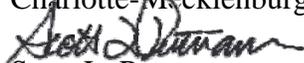


Charlotte Department of Transportation

Memorandum

Date: March 5, 2008

To: Tammie Keplinger & Tom Drake
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department

From: 
Scott L. Putnam
Development Services Division

Subject: Rezoning Petition 08-052: Located on the northeast quadrant of the I-485/Albemarle Road Interchange

Consistency with Transportation Action Plan (TAP): The two goals of the TAP that most directly affected the staff's review of this petition define the integration of land use and transportation, and the provision of transportation choices.

- Goal 1 of the TAP relies on the Centers, Corridors and Wedges land use strategy to be implemented. This project site is located in a Wedge and does not currently appear to support the Centers, Corridors and Wedges land use strategy. However, if added street network were finalized on adjoining sites, then this large-scale development for a Wedge may be conditionally supportive of the TAP.
- Goal 2 of the TAP describes various connectivity and design features that are important for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. Specific comments are identified below that need to be addressed for CDOT's support of the petition and to bring the site plan into compliance with the TAP and best practices for multimodal transportation.

Vehicle Trip Generation

This site could generate approximately 2,400 trips per day as currently zoned. Under the proposed zoning the site could generate approximately 11,000 trips per day. This will have a significant impact on the surrounding thoroughfare system.

Therefore, we request that the developer submit a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) in order to evaluate the effect that site generated traffic will have on the thoroughfare system in the vicinity. The preparer of the TIS contacted Susan Habina (704-432-1563) of the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) prior to beginning the TIS to determine the study requirements. Proposed scoping information was received on March 3, 2008, and is not finalized.

Since access is proposed to an NCDOT-maintained roadway, they may also require a TIS as part of their driveway permit approval process. They may have additional or different requirements for their approval than what is identified in this rezoning process. The developer/petitioner is recommended to meet with NCDOT early in the development process to identify any issues that they may have.

We have the following specific comments that are critical to CDOT's support of the rezoning petition:

1. Albemarle Road (NC Highways 24/27) is designated a Strategic Highway Corridor by the NCDOT, requiring controlled/limited access. Albemarle Road is the only major east-west thoroughfare serving the eastern part of the City/County. There are no parallel major or minor thoroughfares south of Albemarle Road and none within 3 miles north of Albemarle Road. Significant future traffic volumes are projected on Albemarle Road and other than widening, there are few alternatives to increase capacity. There are limited future road projects identified in this area through 2030. Additionally, because the railroad is located south of and parallel to Albemarle Road, there is no practical way to increase the capacity of the existing Albemarle Road/I-485 interchange. In recognition of these capacity constraints and challenges, the Albemarle Road/I-485 Interchange Study Area Plan (approved by the City Council in 2003), limits the amount of non-residential development at this location. The interchange study also indicates that no access point should be within 1,300 feet of the I-485 interchange and that any access point within 0.5 mile of the interchange should be limited to right-in/right-out movements only. Given that this site has frontage (865 feet) less than required for full access (2,600 feet), only the eastern-most access location is acceptable and will only be permitted for right-in/right-out turning movements. Additional access to this site will need to be provided consistent with the adopted area plan as described in comment 3.
2. The amount of the proposed land uses is inconsistent with the adopted area plan at this location. The adopted area plan was based on an analysis to ensure that the land uses could be supported by the transportation network (existing and proposed) in the area. In order for CDOT/CMPC to support the requested area plan changes, the increased development amounts will need to be analyzed to determine whether they will have a comparable transportation impact in the original planning analysis horizon year as the adopted area plan. This issue will be addressed first in the TIS. If there is no significant additional impact as determined by CDOT, then the standard TIS analysis can proceed to address the need to mitigate any of the site's transportation impacts.
3. The adopted area plan also includes necessary internal street connections for this site/adjacent sites. In particular, the adopted plan includes a new public street from this site parallel and north of Albemarle Road and connecting with a new north-south Major Collector Street. This Major Collector is identified on the adopted Major Collector Street Plan and connects Camp Stewart Road with Albemarle Road at the location of the first full access intersection identified in the Albemarle Road/I-485 Interchange Study Area Plan. CDOT/CMPC support of the requested area plan changes is also dependent on the construction of this east-west connector by the petitioner. The petitioner does not currently own all of the property to the east that is needed to construct this roadway, however, the City will assist in right-of-way acquisition in accordance with standard practice through the subdivision process. The petitioner is responsible for all cost associated with design, construction, and the acquisition of right-of-way. CMPC/CDOT has scheduled a meeting on March 20th to discuss the project with the adjacent property owners. The developer of a

subdivision to the north of this site is currently in the subdivision process and is interested in participating with the petitioner in the costs associated with the construction of the Major Collector from this connector to Albemarle Road for access.

4. The street system shown on the plan needs to include a public street stub to the north residential property. This is a requirement from the design charrette and follows guidance from the Subdivision Ordinance. The location of the stub needs to be coordinated with the adjacent property owner.
5. We have discussed access for this site with the NCDOT Division and District Engineers. Special left-turn access designed for exclusive use by emergency vehicles will be considered at a location that does not conflict with the interchange ramp intersection, westbound right-turn lane, and directly serves the emergency entrance area only with no connections to other uses or parking areas. The traffic impact study will need to address the issue of maintaining access exclusivity for emergency vehicles and whether a left-turn lane is recommended/required at this location. Based on CDOT's and NCDOT's review the driveway may be restricted to ingress only. The site plan needs to be revised to show this separate/dedicated emergency vehicle access.
6. The Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) identify Albemarle Road as a Parkway, the most motor vehicle-oriented of Charlotte's street types. For Parkways, the USDG requires special designs for access controls and separate bicycle/pedestrian paths parallel to the roadway. Applying USDG for a Parkway, a 10-foot minimum bicycle/pedestrian path constructed 25 feet from the back-of-curb should be provided along Albemarle Road. The site plan needs to show and label these features.
7. Additional comments and any required transportation improvements will follow our review of the TIS.

We have the following specific comments that are important to CDOT's support of the rezoning petition. We would like the petitioner to give serious consideration to these comments/requests. These may require coordination with related CMPC issues.

1. The appropriate street type for the new street connecting to Albemarle Road at the east edge of the site and continuing to the Major Collector as described above (comment 3) is an Avenue (USDG). Bike lanes (5' minimum width) need to be provided on Avenues.
2. It is requested that the site plan provide an internal system of 5-foot or wider sidewalks that connects building entrances to sidewalks along all new streets and the bicycle and pedestrian path along Albemarle Road.
3. Required parking calculations need to be included on the plan to evaluate if the plan can accommodate required parking and traffic flow.

4. A note needs to be added to plan stating that it is conceptual in nature and that where conditions on the approved conceptual site plan differ from ordinances, standards, and policies in place at the time of engineering plan review in subsequent permitting processes, the site plan will be revised to meet or exceed current standards.

We support the following comments from Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS):

1. A designated area in the parking lots needs to be designated for a Park-N-Ride facility.

We have the following general comments that are provided to aid the petitioner in planning and subsequent permitting phases:

Albemarle Road is a major thoroughfare that may require more than the minimum 100 feet of right of way because of transportation improvements directed in the traffic study. The developer/petitioner should convey right-of-way in fee simple title to meet this requirement, measuring at least 50 feet from the centerline of the roadway.

Adequate sight triangles must be reserved at the proposed street entrance. Two 35' x 35' and two 10' x 70' sight triangles are required for the entrance to meet requirements. All proposed trees, berms, walls, fences, and/or identification signs must not interfere with sight distance at the entrance(s). Such items should be identified on the site plan.

The proposed driveway connection(s) to Albemarle Road will require driveway permit(s) to be submitted to CDOT and the North Carolina Department of Transportation for review and approval. The exact driveway location(s) and type/width of the driveway(s) will be determined by CDOT during the driveway permit process. The locations of the driveway(s) shown on the site plan are subject to change in order to align with driveway(s) on the opposite side of the street and comply with City Driveway Regulations and the City Tree Ordinance.

All proposed commercial driveway connections to a future public street will require a driveway permit to be submitted to CDOT for review and approval.

Any fence or wall constructed along or adjacent to any sidewalk or street right-of-way requires a certificate issued by CDOT.

A Right-of-Way Encroachment Agreement is required for the installation of any non-standard item(s) (irrigation systems, decorative concrete pavement, brick pavers, etc.) within a proposed/existing City maintained street right-of-way by a private individual, group, business, or homeowner's/business association. An encroachment agreement must be approved by CDOT prior to the construction/installation of the non-standard item(s). Contact CDOT for additional information concerning cost, submittal, and liability insurance coverage requirements.

To facilitate building permit/driveway permit review and approval, the site plan must be revised to include the following:

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- All City of Charlotte Land Development Standards (latest revision) will apply.
- Dimension width of the existing and proposed driveways.
- New/reconstructed driveways must be drop curb ramp Type II-Modified driveways.
- Indicate the locations and widths of all adjacent and opposing driveways.
- Indicate typical parking module dimensions.
- Directional wheelchair ramps (two per corner) should be provided at all intersections of public and private streets.

If we can be of further assistance, please advise.

SLP

c: R. H. Grochoske (via email)
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Rezoning File