Mayor and Council Communication
Memo Number: 28
Wednesday, April 21, 2010

CHARLOTTE.

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AGENDA NOTES:

Agenda Item #21 - US 29/NC 49 Roadway Improvement Project
Staff Resource: Sonji Mosley, E&PM, 704-336-3214, smosley@charlottenc.gov

On April 26, City Council will be asked to award the low bid contract to Blythe Construction, Inc. for the construction of the US 29/NC 49 Roadway Improvement Project (Phase 2). This project will improve safety, connectivity and opportunities for development within and in proximity to the project limits of North Tryon Street (US 29) from Orchard Trace Drive to Brookside Lane.

City staff is implementing a traffic communication plan designed to inform commuters and minimize impact on project-area businesses. Highlights from the plan include:

- Direct mail postcards, email blasts and a project website to convey project benefits, construction schedule, detours and lane shifts/closures.
- Corridor tours/project briefings for media traffic reporters before major traffic shifts.
- Consistent updates to 311 for their management of incoming calls/concerns.
- Regular media advisories to traffic reporters concerning lane closures, alternate routes, detours, etc.
- Ten fixed/variable message boards to provide real time updates and upcoming traffic shifts.
- Meetings with impacted business owners to provide project updates, listen to their feedback and collaborate on ways to communicate access information to their customers.

City staff met in March with 25 major project stakeholders, including Lowe's Motor Speedway, Ikea, University City Partners, Mecklenburg EMS Agency (Medic), Verizon Wireless, CMPD University Division and UNCC. Project staff gave an overview of the project and discussed the tools to be used to communicate important traffic information to area businesses and their customers. The attached map outlining alternative routes has been emailed to all those in attendance at the breakfast. In May, a newsletter update and map will be sent to property owners and tenants within a ¾ mile radius of the project limits.

Commuters, property owners and businesses will be encouraged to sign up for email notices. Once construction is underway, email blasts will be sent approximately one week before lane closures, two weeks before road closures and immediately if conditions warrant. Media will regularly be given information on project benefits, progress, current impacts and what to expect in the near future.

29.49. Map.pdf

AGENDA NOTES (continued):

Citizens' Forum - Park Road Sidewalk Project Update

Staff Resources: Sonji Mosley, E&PM, 704-336-3214, smosley@charlottenc.gov
Vivian Coleman, CDOT, 704-353-0481, vcoleman@charlottenc.gov

A resident of Park Road has signed up to speak at the April 26 Citizens' Forum in opposition to the Park Road Sidewalk Project. This memo contains information on the project status, its public input process, and staff's responses to the feedback received.

The Park Road Sidewalk Project will complete a 0.2 mile gap in the pedestrian network on Park Road. Once completed, it will connect several miles of sidewalk along Park Road and within the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as add a varied width planting strip throughout. Staff has made every effort to develop a context sensitive design that minimizes impacts to trees and yards, while providing a safer walking environment in this area. City Council has received a number of informational memos about this project stating the need to complete this gap along the thoroughfare.

This project impacts fifteen parcels and is now in the real estate phase. The City needs to obtain temporary and permanent easements from each property owner to build the project. Two property owners have already signed easement agreements and Real Estate Services is working with the other land owners.

Some impacted property owners have expressed opposition at various City Council meetings and neighborhood meetings. Some inaccurate information regarding cost and impacts to trees has been distributed, so staff developed a website for the Park Road sidewalk project to provide factual information on the project. The website also addresses requests from residents for additional information such as the Park Road design, City adopted plans and national pedestrian studies. The website is:
www.charmeck.org/Departments/City+Engineering/See+Our+Projects/Transportation/Sidewalk/Park+Road+Sidewalk.htm

City staff has met twice with the Freedom Park Neighborhood Association Board members on February 17, 2010 and March 16, 2010 and presented at the Freedom Park Neighborhood Association meeting on March 25, 2010 to address resident concerns and provide an overview of the project. Staff also met with a number of Park Road property owners on April 1 to provide further detail regarding project design, review a conceptual landscape plan and to address questions and concerns. Answers to their questions were carefully documented and distributed to the attendees on Monday, April 19.

Staff has received emails from Board members of the Sedgefield Neighborhood Association and the Dilworth Community Development Association in support of this project. The project also was identified as a sidewalk need during the Colonial Village/Sedgefield NIP public involvement process. City staff plans to continue working through the real estate phase and

move into the bid phase to advance the project to construction. The City Manager and City Attorney offices are

AGENDA NOTES (continued):

actively aware of the various correspondence and recognize City staff's efforts in working with the property owners of Park Road.

The total project cost is estimated at $400,000. Thirteen trees are planned to be preserved within the construction area. Nine trees of varying sizes and one hedgerow are planned for removal. The project includes a substantial tree replacement plan to restore the tree canopy where trees are planned for removal. Staff has kept Council member Kinsey aware of ongoing correspondence with residents.

Citizens' Forum - Murrayhill-Wedgewood Sidewalk Project Update

Staff Resources: Sonji Mosley, E&PM, 704-336-3214, smosley@charlottenc.gov
Vivian Coleman, CDOT, 704-353-0481, vcoleman@charlottenc.gov

A resident of the Madison Park neighborhood has signed up to speak at the April 26 Citizens' Forum in opposition to the Murrayhill-Wedgewood Sidewalk Project. This memo contains information on the project's public input process, and staff's response to the input received.

On December 2, 2009 City staff held a public information meeting on the Murrayhill-Wedgewood Sidewalk Project to provide an update and receive additional input regarding design details. Property owners along both sides of the street and the Madison Park Homeowners Association were notified of the meeting. One hundred and sixty-six invitations were mailed. Twelve residents attended.

This project is located within the public right-of-way and includes the following street segments:

- Murrayhill Road between Woodlawn Road and Lamont Drive
- The western portion of Wedgewood Drive from Murrayhill Road to Seneca Place
- A gap along the north side of Seneca Place between the school driveway and the school entrance

This project has received substantial public involvement over the past year and a half, including involvement of City Council members and several updates with residents. In response to residents' comments during the fall of 2008, staff was able to design the sidewalk to fit within the City's public right-of-way and reduced the typical planting strip width from eight-feet to five-feet to assure the sidewalk was maintained within the City's public right-of-way. There are a few locations where the sidewalk meanders outside of the public right-of-way to preserve trees. In response to resident comments early in the process, staff deleted a segment of the street on the eastern end of Murrayhill Road and added a segment along Seneca Place near the local elementary school. Staff has worked diligently with the public to achieve the current design.

The majority of the residents continue to support the sidewalk as reported through the comments received after the December 2, 2009 meeting. The Madison Park Homeowner's Association also supports the project with the design as proposed. However, some residents remain opposed to the City's design which includes a 5-foot planting strip. A letter was sent to property owners and the

AGENDA NOTES (continued):

HOA on January 29, 2010 responding to resident input, addressing the current design and the need for a planting strip on a street with valley curb.

Ms. Karen Houston, a property owner impacted by the design, who has signed up to speak at Monday's forum, has spoken before the City Council and continues to question the design. The design is complete and will soon advance to the real estate phase. Staff is making every effort to meet with property owners on an individual basis to address issues and make minor design adjustments relative to tree impacts, driveway adjustments and grading where feasible and reasonable for the project. Staff has kept Council member Dulin aware of ongoing correspondence with residents.

INFORMATION:

New Market Tax Credits

Staff Resource: Patrick T. Mumford, Neighborhood & Business Services, 704-336-5612, pmumford@charlottenc.gov

In order to grow jobs and investments in Charlotte, while strengthening the City's low-income neighborhoods, City staff is evaluating applying for an allocation of New Market Tax Credits (NMTC). The NMTC program, which has been in existence for eight years, is designed to make investment capital available to businesses in qualifying low-income communities, to create jobs and spur additional economic development. NMTC can be used to finance community development projects such as community facilities. They may also be used to make loans or investments, or to provide counseling for businesses.

Applying for NMTC is a two-step process. The first step is to create a for-profit Community Development Entity (CDE), which must be completed by April 26, 2010. A CDE is an entity, a corporation, or partnership whose primary mission is serving low-income communities or low-income persons. The second step is to have the CDE submit an application to the U.S. Treasury by June 2, 2010. The CDE would be a partnership between the City, Charlotte Center City Partners and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Development Corporation.

City staff is evaluating this opportunity and the City Manager has referred this item to the Economic Development Committee for further review. The Economic Development Committee will discuss this item during its May 6 and May 20 meetings and make a recommendation to Council on whether to submit an application for NMTC. If the Economic Development Committee recommends that an application be filed, City Council would need to consider that recommendation at its May 24, 2010 meeting.

INFORMATION (continued):

Accidental Discharge from Sugar Creek Plant
Staff Resource: Barry Gullet, CMU, 704-391-5098, bgullet@ci.charlotte.nc.us

An estimated 155,722 gallons of treated wastewater that had not yet undergone the final stage of ultraviolet disinfection was inadvertently discharged into Little Sugar Creek last Saturday.

The incident occurred over a 30-minute period, around midday Saturday, as operators were cleaning the disinfection equipment at the Sugar Creek Plant on Closeburn Road. All indications are the problem was the result of human error, not a mechanical malfunction.

There was no public health threat, and there were no fish kills or environmental impacts. State water quality officials were notified the same day. The water released had gone through nearly all stages of treatment. This would not be categorized by regulators as a sewage spill. Utilities staff have carefully reviewed the incident and are taking corrective action to prevent a repeat of this situation. The state-certified operators at Sugar Creek safely treat and recycle an average of 14 million gallons of wastewater each day and have been recognized for the past several years for outstanding pollution prevention through consistent compliance with the plant's regulatory discharge permit.

Non-Residential Building Code Update
Staff Resource: Walter Abernethy, Neighborhood & Business Services, 704-336-4213, wabernethy@charlottenc.gov

On April 1, 2010 the City's new Non-Residential Building Code went into effect. The new ordinance was enacted to help address unsafe and dilapidated conditions of vacant and occupied commercial structures.

Since April 1, City Code Enforcement staff has initiated 60 new cases requiring an inspection of commercial property. These cases were generated from nine citizen service requests, 21 independent field observations, and 31 public agency referrals.

To date, Code Enforcement has addressed issues at several hotels (both vacant and occupied), an abandoned grocery store, and several other vacant business locations.

Article on Shopping Center Drive Project to Run in 4/23/10 *University City Weekly*
Staff Resources: Kruti Desai, E&PM, 704-353-1795, kdesai@charlottenc.gov
Matt Magnasco, CDOT, 704-336-3368, mmagnasco@charlottenc.gov

The April 23 issue of *University City Weekly* (UCW) will include an article on a transportation project to extend Shopping Center Drive from its current terminus at the Wal-Mart on North

Tryon Street and cross I-85 to IBM Drive near Martin Middle School. The project will include building bridges over I-85 and Doby Creek and will cross I-85 between the City and Harris

INFORMATION (continued):

Boulevard interchanges. A section of the project, generally from the Wal-Mart to an extension of Ikea Boulevard, will be built by Crescent Resources as part of their Belgate development.

The project is currently funded for planning, design, and partial right-of-way acquisition. Construction and balance of right-of-way funding will be proposed for a future bond. The street is a specific recommendation of both the University City Area Plan (adopted by City Council in 2007) and the pending University Research Park Area Plan (Council action requested for June 2010), and will allow for improved east-west mobility in the University City area by providing another route parallel to Harris Boulevard. A feasibility study was performed in 2008. In November 2009, City Council awarded the planning/design contract for the project.

The project is currently in the planning phase. UCW inquired about the project in order to inform area residents of it. The project team does not expect to have a public meeting until the fall of this year as additional analysis was requested by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The project team is coordinating with area stakeholders and with NCDOT, Federal Highway Administration, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and Duke Energy.

ATTACHMENT:

March 25 Restructuring Government Committee Meeting Summary
(attached at the end of this document)