

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of September 8, 2011

(Present: Kent, Healy, Welch, Harrison, Youngblood, Moore, Korest, Stan Bukowski, Helen Fischer)

- (1) Sandy Creek Park. Youngblood said that a \$5000 city grant for park improvement has been approved. The butterfly garden, flooded in early summer, need replanting and a new design that will raise it above the lakeside flood level. Fischer suggested use of native azaleas as an understory as the trees at the top of the slope get bigger.
- (2) Hollow Rock Park. Korest said a number of citizens who live along Randolph Rd. complained at the TAC meeting about possible closure of Pickett Rd. TAC will hold a recommendation pending further study. She said that some contend that trucks are doing damage to the dirt road.

Bukowski said that Pickett is dangerous because of an area of limited visibility. In any case, Phase I of the park involves a parking lot in Orange County, accessed off Erwin Rd. Meanwhile, Korest suggested, Durham could study the design of bridges and trails.

- (3) TTA Route. February is the hard deadline for selection of the “preferred alternative” route.

John Kent, in consultation with Bob Healy and others, has been drafting a set of “Map Drawing Principles” that reflect the NHCCAC’s concerns over the “cross basin” TTA route and suggest an alternative, less environmentally damaging, route that the Committee is likely to support.

These principles were discussed at the September 8 meeting.

Kent said that he walks along Sandy Creek east of Garrett and found some nice wetlands (which could be impacted by certain transit routes). He said that he measured the distance between 15-501 and the Wellington Apartments. There is a 60 ft. cleared highway right of way and another 24 feet between right of way and the apartments. He noted that TTA is seeking a 43 ft. corridor for Bus Rapid Transit and 30 ft. for Light Rail Transit. Youngblood said that the type of construction used in the corridor would make a big difference in its environmental impact.

The version below incorporates ideas raised in the September 8 discussion.

“Map Drawing Principles” 9-18-2011 Version

Consistent with its "Resolution by the New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee in Response to Proposed 'Locally Preferred Alternative'" for a TTA Transit Corridor between South Square and SW Durham Drive, as passed by unanimous vote August

11, 2011 the NHCCAC has identified the following as an alignment for either of the proposed, fixed guideway, alternative technologies (LRT or BRT-High*) that would minimize direct, secondary and cumulative impacts on resources identified in the 1992 New Hope Plan:

1. Across the New Hope Creek Corridor/Floodplain, the alignment should minimize the disruptive impacts to wildlife and natural ecosystems and keep any project disturbance within an already highly disturbed area. We suggest: within the 15-501 south side R/W (as close as 13 feet away from the south side of the new, New Hope Creek bridge pair**), using the 1994 transit route reservation along the north side of the "North Creek Apartments" (AKA "Colonial Grand At Patterson Place Apartments") and (to the apartments' east) the two county parcels on the west side of the New Hope Creek and abutting the south side of the 15-501 R/W.

2. Across the Sandy Creek Corridor/Floodplain, the alignment should minimize the disruptive impacts to wildlife and natural ecosystems and keep any project disturbance within an already highly disturbed area. We suggest: within the south side R/W of the eastbound off ramp from 15-501 to MLK Jr. Parkway, north of Larchmont Road.

Transit Station and LRT Operation & Maintenance Facility:

3. Siting decisions for transit stations should avoid potential significant secondary and cumulative impacts to Corridor lands and floodplains (for example, increases in nearby noise, traffic, and water quality degradation) that will result from project proposed station locations and transit oriented development. Accordingly the proposed Patterson Place station, located east of Sayward Drive and west and south of SW Durham Drive, is too close to the New Hope Creek Corridor/Floodplain and should be located, we suggest, on the west side of Witherspoon Blvd. See for example, as shown in the adopted SW Durham - SE Chapel Hill Collector Street Plan (see <http://www.dchcmpo.org/dmdocuments/ApprovedCSPNetworkPoster.pdf>).

4. Siting decisions for transit operation & maintenance facilities should also avoid potential significant secondary and cumulative impacts to Corridor lands and floodplains (for example, increases in nearby noise, traffic, and water quality degradation). Accordingly the proposed Patterson Place LRT operation & maintenance facility, with its ingress/egress rail line spur from the LRT mainline,***, is not an appropriate neighbor to the Corridor.

Notes:

* LRT (Light Rail Transit) or BRT-High (Bus Rapid Transit on a fixed guideway)

** As spelled out in the NEPA FONSI document for the 15-501 bridge replacement project

*** The proposed facility would be located up slope from the NHC Corridor's "Mt. Moriah Bottomlands & Slopes" and "15-501 Bottomlands." The ingress/egress spur would be located east of SW Durham Drive and south of US 15-501 and along the face of the slope just to the west of the "15-501 Bottomlands

On Sunday, September 25, the following article, titled "Site of Rail Corridor Sparks Debate" appeared on the first page of the Durham Herald—

http://heraldsun.com/view/full_story_news_durham/15650024/article-Site-of-rail-corridor-sparks-debate?instance=main_article

The article is roughly accurate in describing the NHCCAC critique of the rail corridor siting. We have not, however, suggested that a station be located at the corner of 15-501 and Garrett Rd. This is one of a number of design options. It would likely be a good idea if there is induced development on the vacant or underutilized land on the Darryl's site and eastward along 15-501, and a way for the large number of apartment dwellers along Garrett on the north side of 15-501 to cross the highway to board transit. The "freeway" option for 15-501, rather than making this impossible, could be designed to allow a safe crossing and a separation of automobile and transit traffic. However, we have not commented publicly on this possibility.

Next meeting, Thursday, October 13, 5 pm at Garrett Farms Recreation Center