



Livable Streets Update (FIVE IN FIVE)



DowntownRaleigh

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OFFICIALS APPROVE INCREASE OF LESS THAN 3 PERCENT IN CONVENTION CENTER FUNDING

The Raleigh City Council and the Wake County Board of Commissioners on Dec. 18 approved an increase of less than 3 percent in the funding for the new convention center. The City Council voted 5 to 3 to approve, with Tommy Craven, Philip Isley and Russ Stephenson being the dissenters. The Wake County Board of Commissioners voted 5 to 2 to approve, with Paul Coble and Tony Gurley objecting.

To fund the increase, the officials amended the interlocal agreement to accommodate directing the additional \$6,383,136 from Wake County's prepared food and beverage and hotel/motel tax to the project.

The \$6.38 million comes in two parts: \$3,383,136 for buy-back items; and \$3 million to replenish contingencies. The buy-back items include: \$185,760 for skylights in the entry area; \$156,400 for canopies at the Cabarrus Street entrance; \$936,000 for stone flooring in the lobby; \$288,000 for moveable partitions in the exhibit hall; and \$1,814,976 for kitchen equipment.

The City's Chief Financial Officer Perry James said that the increase leaves the model in a strong financial position, assuming that tax revenues grow at the conservative level of 3 percent for the hotel tax and 5 percent for the food and beverage tax. Mr. James stated that the funding model is stronger than when it was developed due to increases of 8.1 percent in the food and beverage tax and 7.3 percent in the hotel/motel occupancy tax. The objectives of the convention center financing model are to ensure that long-term funding of the following is done within the dedicated interlocal tax revenues:

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- financing the costs of convention center and hotel;
- providing the annual expenses required for operating support and capital maintenance reserve and special marketing costs for the facility;
- financing for an expansion in 10 years; and,
- maintaining the fund balance in the financing fund equal to no less than the highest year of debt service.

City Manager J. Russell, County Manager David Cooke, Barnhill Contracting Vice President John Muter and members of the convention center design team Dudley Lacy and Stephen Shuster presented the need to increase the convention center project's bottom line to \$221,921,936.

Mr. Allen introduced the request by reminding the elected officials that a series of good decisions had defined the convention center project. The City Manager pointed to choosing the right site and design. He said that the timing of the construction allowed for historically low interest rates. He offered that constructing a conservative financial model and choosing to have a construction manager at risk have been enormously beneficial. All told, he said, the project is so successful that it is securing bookings far beyond what was anticipated and is fueling investment in downtown at an unprecedented rate. He asked the elected officials to make one more good decision and increase the funding to include the items that will make the convention center a facility of signature quality.

"Our crystal balls have worked pretty well, but not perfectly," he said. "For instance, in hindsight I wish we had been clearer in representing some critical value engineering items which were not included in the approved February budget adjustment. We were overly optimistic that we could work five items back into the project. They need to be included now." (The elected officials met on Feb. 2 to amend the project's budget to \$215,538,800.)

More than \$29 million in value engineering has been done by the project team. The following criteria were used as guidelines to evaluate the appropriateness of all value engineering suggestions:

- do not reduce the revenue production program area (square footage);
- minimize the impacts on long-term operating costs;
- minimize reduction of quality of completed facility; and,
- minimize the impact on schedule delays due to redesign.

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Downtown Raleigh Alliance
www.downtownraleigh.org

Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce
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Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau
www.visitraleigh.com

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Among the reasons that the requested items be included in the project were:

- carpeting for the high-use lobby floor would require replacing every five to seven years. The stone floor would erase this ongoing expense;
- skylights would make the building as transparent as possible from the street, a prominently cited goal of the Livable Street Initiative. Also, without the skylights the entry glazing will be more reflective;
- canopies at the Cabarrus Street entrance would provide additional weather shelter for convention attendees;
- the exhibit hall will be less flexible without the moveable partitions. With one less partition, opportunities for simultaneous events and the size of available halls will be negatively impacted, as will revenue; and
- the annual operating costs for kitchen equipment will be higher with a lease arrangement.

SOARING CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Mr. Muter informed the elected officials attending the meeting at the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts that local construction costs have soared more than 50 percent since 2003, when the convention center project was initiated. He attributed the escalation to market conditions that include the effects of natural disasters, the hike in petroleum products and the local construction boom with University of North Carolina bond projects, school construction and the \$500,000 Raleigh-Durham International Airport's Terminal C project.

The project's construction manager used as examples of spiraling construction costs locally: the 27 percent increase in the West Regional Library; the 56 percent increase in the costs for East Garner Elementary in 2006 from the same prototypical design that was used for Turner Creek Elementary in 2002; and the 82 percent increase in the costs for the Northern Regional Center in 2006 from the Eastern Regional Center that was built in 2001 from the same prototypical design.

In addition to containing costs in such an inflationary construction climate, Mr. Muter pointed to other successes the project has posted, such as more than 514,000 man hours of work without a work-loss injury.

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He also referred to the 28.3 percent MWBE participation rate and the 70 percent local participation rate. The project defines "local" as the 13-county area. Ninety percent of the work on the project has stayed in North Carolina.

SITE IS SELLING

The City Council and County Commission members were told that the convention center's bookings have doubled a key business plan projection, according to an independent analyst, and is on pace to exceed even more. Tom Hazinski, managing director of HVS International and author of the center's 2003 business plan said: "This is one of the best set of advanced bookings I have seen prior to a convention center opening."

The analysis includes the following:

- year-to-date definite and tentative room nights are double the projections for the first partial year of operations;
- room nights already are 86 percent of projections for the first full year of operations; and,
- 41 percent of the expected room nights for the first five years of operation already are booked.

Some of the events that have led to these bookings include: three international conferences, 11 national conventions, and 18 state and regional conventions. Ten of the state and regional conventions have signed for multiple events.

The new 500,000-square-foot convention center will open in 2008. It will feature a 150,000-square-foot exhibit hall, 16 meeting rooms and a grand ballroom with a seating capacity of 2,400. The building will front onto Salisbury Street with a grand public plaza. To view the construction of the new convention center and for more information on the project, visit www.rccproject.com.

RTN BROADCASTS OF JOINT MEETING

Raleigh Television Network's cable channel 11 will broadcast the Dec. 18 joint meeting of the Raleigh City Council and the Wake County Commissioners at the following times:

Friday, Dec. 22	7 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 23	1 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 24	9 a.m.

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Monday, Dec. 25	2 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 26	3 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 27	3 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 28	8 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 29	7 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 30	1 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 31	11 a.m.

CITY OF RALEIGH ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR FRED FLETCHER VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The City of Raleigh, Parks and Recreation Department is now accepting nominations for the 2007 Fred Fletcher Outstanding Volunteer Awards. Since 1996, the Parks and Recreation Department and the City's Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Advisory Board have recognized outstanding volunteerism in the City parks system by citizens, businesses, community and non-profit organizations. The Fred Fletcher Volunteer Award honors Mr. Fletcher's 54 years of dedicated service to the department and commitment to the benefits of parks and recreation.

Nominations must be submitted by 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 26 to Cindy Trumbower, Volunteer Services director for the Parks and Recreation Department, at cindy.trumbower@ci.raleigh.nc.us. Nominators are encouraged to nominate several volunteers, and are asked to be thorough when completing the form. The selection committee needs a complete explanation of why the nominated volunteer's history of service is worthy of the honor. Nominations will be evaluated by length of service, intensity of service, and active involvement within the past five years. Awards will be given in the following categories:

- Award of Excellence. Presented to a person who exhibits the best example of voluntary action to improve the quality of services and/or facilities of the Parks and Recreation Department. Contributions of this volunteer should have a continuing impact on the equality of services or facilities offered by the department;
- Outstanding Financial Contributor. Presented to an individual or organization that has made a significant donation to the Parks and Recreation Department;

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- Outstanding Athletic Volunteer. Presented to a volunteer who demonstrates a high degree of personal commitment needed to organize, teach, and instill, good sportsmanship and enhance the department's Athletic Program;
- Outstanding Greenway Volunteer. Presented to an individual or group who has consistently demonstrated devotion to the care or enhancement of the City's greenway system;
- Outstanding Adopt-A-Park Volunteer. Presented to an individual or group who has consistently demonstrated care above and beyond the call of duty for a specific Raleigh park as a leader in the City's Adopt-A-Park program;
- Outstanding Senior Adults Program Volunteer. Presented to an individual that demonstrates a high commitment and effort towards the enhancement of senior adult programs;
- Outstanding Volunteer Group or Organization. Presented to the group that contributes time or talent to enhance park facilities and or programs;
- Outstanding Park Volunteer. Presented to an individual who has consistently demonstrated devotion to the care or enhancement of a City park;
- Outstanding Project Volunteer. Presented to a volunteer who shares time and effort towards the enhancement of a specific park-related project;
- Outstanding Program Volunteer. Presented to a volunteer who shares time, talent, and efforts towards the enhancement of a specific program; and,
- Outstanding Teen Volunteer. Presented to a teen that demonstrates a high degree of commitment to a program, event, or park.

Nomination forms are available at www.parks.raleighnc.gov, or by contacting Cindy Trumbower at 890-3292. The 2007 Fred Fletcher Awards Ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 3 at Fred Fletcher Park.

NEW CAT FARE RATES AND SCHEDULES SET TO BEGIN ON JAN. 2, 2007

Effective Jan. 2, 2007, new schedules and rate changes will go into effect for the Capital Area Transit system. Visit: <http://www.raleighnc.gov/transit> for a complete route schedule and map.

The major route changes include:

- All Extended Service Demand Responsive Connector Zones will be converted to fixed routes;
- During the daytime, Route 4 Rex Hospital will be combined with Route 6c Creedmoor to provide a "one seat ride" from downtown to Creedmoor Rd at Strickland Road. The reversible loop on Route 4 will be eliminated as will the section of the route on Morningside Drive and Wycliff Road. From Rex Hospital, the bus will travel to Crabtree Valley Mall via Edwards Mill Rd and continue north on Creedmoor Road to Strickland Road. It will return via the same route;
- During the evenings, Route 4 Rex Hospital will travel outbound from Rex Hospital via Edwards Mill Road and end at Crabtree Valley Mall. It will return to Rex Hospital via Blue Ridge Road;
- The one-way loop (Lake Boone Trail, Cambridge Street, Fairview Road, Lewis Circle and Chester Street) on Route 16 Oberlin will be eliminated. The route will be extended to Crabtree Valley Mall and Rex Hospital. It will travel from Glenwood Village to Crabtree Valley Mall via Glenwood Ave and on to Rex Hospital via Blue Ridge Road and return the same way; and,
- Route 24c North Cross-town will travel in a loop following the current westbound path from Wake Forest Road to North Hills Mall. Eastbound from North Hills it will travel Dartmouth Road to Camelot Drive to St Albans Street to Hardimont Road to New Hope Church Road and then continue on the current route.

The new fare schedule is also available at

THREE PROPERTIES SELECTED FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

On Dec. 5, the Raleigh City Council approved the Raleigh Historic Landmark designation for three properties.

- Boylan Apartments, 817 Hillsborough Street - Built in 1935, the three-building complex is an example of 1930s, garden apartments using Colonial Revival architecture. Commissioned by Rufus Boylan, the construction project was one of the first in the nation to participate in a Public Works Administration program that loaned federal money to private developers. The program aimed to provide jobs for the unemployed while creating quality housing for residents with low incomes. Upon completion, the apartments were filled immediately. Rents were set at \$35 or \$45 per month.
- Branch Banking & Trust Building, 333 Fayetteville Street - Built in 1965, the 15-story office building is an example of the international style developed in the 1950s. The exterior of the building has undergone only slight changes since it was first opened. The building was designed by New York-based architects Emery Roth & Sons, designers of the Pan Am Building, Penn Center, Getty Oil Building, Hanover Bank Building and the MetLife Building that are part of New York City's skyline. The building was Raleigh's tallest structure until the completion of One and Two Hanover Square in the 1980s.
- Mary Elizabeth Hospital and Medical Arts Building, 1100 and 1110 Wake Forest Road - Built in 1920, the hospital building was Raleigh's first private hospital. Designed by Dr. Harold Glascock, the hospital's founder, chief of staff and head of surgery, the building is an example of small community hospital architecture of the early 20th century. The hospital was a home to many "firsts" in Raleigh, including the first blood transfusion in North Carolina, the first use of frozen pathological samples, the first use of penicillin in Wake County, the first modern obstetrical unit in the area, and the first radium treatments in Raleigh.

CITY ENCOURAGES DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES TO RECYCLE

An unusual-looking truck has joined the mix of cars, buses and pedestrians in downtown Raleigh's traffic. A recycling truck circles downtown every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon to pick up recyclables from businesses.

The program, known as "Downtown Raleigh Recycles," began in August. To date, 30 businesses are recycling paper and plastic, metal or glass food and beverage containers. This pilot program offers businesses the convenience of putting out recycling at the same time as garbage. The program benefits the City by reducing the amount of garbage that is sent to the North Wake Landfill. Additional businesses are supporting the program through recycling of cardboard boxes.

Participating businesses are easy to spot because they use large blue carts or small green bins, both provided by the City of Raleigh Solid Waste Services Department. The recycling containers are provided free of charge with support from a grant from the North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance.

Recyclables are collected by a two-person crew using a recycling truck that was modified with lifters to empty the carts safely and quickly. Businesses in the Central Business District may be eligible to participate even if they are not using the City for garbage service.

Downtown businesses that wish to join the program should call Bianca Bradford with the Solid Waste Services Department at 831-6890, or email bianca.bradford@ci.raleigh.nc.us.

DOWNTOWN EVENTS CALENDER

12/26 - 12/31	Cirque Dreams	Memorial Auditorium
12/31	New Year's Eve Concert - North Carolina Symphony	Meymandi Concert Hall
12/31	First Night	
1/2 - 1/7	Movin' Out	Memorial Auditorium
1/30 - 2/4	Dirty Rotten Scoundrels	Memorial Auditorium
2/13 - 2/18	The Light in The Piazza	Memorial Auditorium

FIRST NIGHT® RALEIGH

2007

License To Thrill

FIRST NIGHT® RALEIGH 2007

Join **THOUSANDS** of friends in Downtown Raleigh for the area's only New Years Eve Celebration of the Arts!

On December 31, 2006 Artsposure will present its 16th Annual First Night Raleigh featuring over 100 performances.

Buttons will be on sale for \$9 (for adults and children ages 6 and up) beginning December 1 at over 100 area outlets including, Harris Teeter, Eckerd Drug and CARQUEST Auto Parts stores.

Purchase your button before December 31 and save on admission and receive coupons for local arts performances, including a discount to the North Carolina Symphony, Raleigh Little Theater, Carolina Ballet, Pine Cone, and Cirque Dreams at the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts.

The **CHILDREN'S CELEBRATION** begins at 3 pm at the NC Museums of History and Natural Sciences and Bicentennial Plaza.

Then join 3,000 neighbors for the **PEOPLE'S PROCESSION**.

TWO COUNTDOWNS: 7 pm & 12 Midnight with Fireworks and Raleigh Acorn Drop at the 400 block of Fayetteville Street!

Volunteer for a 3-hour shift and receive an admission button for free! To volunteer, email volunteer@artsposure.org.

Check back here for more updates in late November!

Email us at info@artsposure.org or call 919-832-8699 for more information.



