

UPDATE

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 26, 2010

Meetings

A Fort Sanders Stakeholders Meeting will be held Thursday, July 29 at 3:30 p.m. at the Howard Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy, 1640 Cumberland Avenue, to review variances requested by Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center for proposed new signs and wayfinding measures on the hospital's campus.

Staff will conduct a workshop/training session for planning commissioners on Thursday, July 29 at 5:00 p.m. in the large conference room of the MPC offices in the City County building. Development services staff will review the application, staff reporting and agenda setting process and each of the types of applications that appear on the monthly MPC meeting.

Excellence Awards

MPC will hold their 29th Annual Excellence Awards banquet on August 26 at the Knoxville Convention Center. The keynote speaker will be Carol Evans, Executive Director of Legacy Parks Foundation, who will present "Doing What Comes Naturally." A reception will begin at 6:00 followed by dinner at 6:45. Tickets are \$30; call 215-2500 for reservations. Reservations and payment must be received by Friday, August 13.

Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

MPC and TPO staff are taking on a significant project - working within a consortium of government agencies, regional planning agencies, non-profit organizations, and allied public and private sector partners to prepare a request for HUD's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program. The request is for a Sustainable Communities Initiative to improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decisions, and increase state, regional, and local capacity to incorporate livability, sustainability, and social equity values into land use plans and zoning. The grant request may be for \$2 million, with up to \$1 million more expected in leveraged matching funds. The application must be submitted by August 23 and awardees will be announced a few weeks thereafter.

TPO

TPO staff members have finished a draft of the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Plan. This plan, which is updated every two years, lists all of the proposed transportation projects receiving federal funds. The draft will be available at www.knoxtrans.org soon.

Tennessee Department of Transportation Commissioner Gerald Nicely announced in June that TDOT will not build the Knoxville Parkway Project, also known as State Route 475 and the Orange Route. The Commissioner cited recent traffic studies and cost as reasons behind the decision to select the "no build" option.

Bicycle Program

The first two training sessions for the Bicycling Ambassadors program were held July 13 and July 15. The ambassadors will still need to complete a second training session and attend an event with a mentor. Anyone who wants to join in the fun, can email Kelley Segars at kelly.segars@knoxtrans.org. Each Ambassador will receive a \$50 gift card once they complete the training and 4 hours of work, and a \$100 gift card after working another 10 hours.

KAT Grand Opening Events

On Friday, August 6, KAT will host a First Friday Open House/Art Exhibit from 5-8 p.m. with special emphasis on the art and architecture of the new facility as explained by the project's head architect.

Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam along with other dignitaries will officially open the new facility with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Friday, August 13 (time TBA.)

KAT will host a Knoxville Station Passenger Open House for all community members on Saturday, August 14 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Passengers can tour the facility, plan their new trips and obtain information to prepare for the route changes the following Monday. Buses will be leaving from the platform during the day to travel the new bus routes.

Comprehensive Planning

MPC staff have finished a draft of a summary report on 10 years of work in the Empowerment Zone and are waiting for it to be reviewed by the city's Community Development Department.

Staff also have drafted the form based code that is suggested for the western portion of the Magnolia Avenue Corridor.

Information Services

The 2010 Knoxville Area Facts and Figures publication is now available. Copies are available in the MPC office or online at <http://www.knoxmpc.org/locldata/knoxff.htm>. This annual publication includes a statistical summary of local physical, social, cultural, government, and economic conditions in the Knoxville area.

Healthy Kids / Healthy Communities

MPC and TPO staff are assisting Knox County Health Department in dealing with the issue of childhood obesity. Staff are reviewing Knoxville and Knox County development related regulations to identify and address barriers to active living and healthy eating that exist within these policies and regulations. Issues identified include sidewalk requirements, street and greenway connectivity, availability and access to parks and open space, preservation of farm land, and opportunities for urban agriculture.