



MEETING SYNOPSIS

September 25, 2019

The following is a summary of the second meeting of the Elevate Advisory Council Connectivity Subcommittee. The meeting attendance sheet is attached to this summary. The agenda and other meeting materials can be found on the Elevate Tuscaloosa website under Advisory Council > Meetings.

A discussion was held on the following topics:

Process Updates

Brendan Moore (City of Tuscaloosa) provided an update and review of the Elevate accountability process. He also discussed the subcommittee members' roles and responsibilities.

Mayor Walt Maddox (City of Tuscaloosa) thanked the subcommittee for volunteering their time to provide input, advice, and counsel towards the Elevate process. He recognized that the subcommittee members are advocates in the community and asked them to continue to be ambassadors. Mayor Maddox emphasized that Elevate Tuscaloosa was not passed to maintain status quo, but to take the City of Tuscaloosa to the next level.

Bill Ashley (subcommittee member) thanked the Mayor and city staff for their leadership and organization. He recognized that the process was efficient due to hard work and preparation.

Mr. Moore encouraged subcommittee members to provide ideas and input for process improvements. He provided an example from the Elevate Parks and Recreation Subcommittee. Members expressed their desire to master plan all the parks, and this recommendation will be implemented. Mr. Moore also acknowledged that new projects could be added to the process as opportunities arise. All topics are up for discussion, even if they are not on the current agenda.

Tuscaloosa National Airport

Runway Improvements

Tera Tubbs (City of Tuscaloosa) led the discussion of the runway improvements. The runway is currently under design by Atkins North America.

Nicole Prewitt (subcommittee member) inquired about the details the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant proposal.

Ms. Tubbs informed members that the FAA awarded the City with a discretionary grant for \$150,000 over the span of three years (for a total of \$450,000). The City requested the entire construction and design cost on the grant application. This grant is based on the current number of 3,000 enplanements. Ms. Tubbs gave an example that if enplanements could increase to 10,000, the grant amount would increase to \$1 million.

William Blakeney (subcommittee member) asked where planes will land while the runway is under construction. Ms. Tubbs explained the options of using the shorter runway or the taxiway, but noted it is too early in the process to make that decision.

Mayor Maddox informed subcommittee members that the FAA has determined a new type of runway integrity. To attract commercial airlines, we need to meet this standard.

David Pass (subcommittee member) stated that the runway has not been paved in 20 years. He expressed the importance of addressing the runway, as it affects the local economy. When the runway improvements are completed, the effort should move to attracting commercial air service. Ms. Tubbs added that the runway improvements are not just for commercial airlines, but cargo as well.

Tuscaloosa Police Department (TPD) Hangar

Tera Tubbs informed the subcommittee that the TPD Hangar has been recommended for a design contract with Ellis Architects. The City Council will vote on the contract on October 1.

Michele Coley (subcommittee member) inquired how Ellis Architects was selected and if a bid was requested for the project. Ms. Tubbs informed the members that the City of Tuscaloosa does not bid professional services. She noted Ellis Architects' expertise in this specialized field. Ms. Coley asked if the companies will rotate. Ms. Tubbs responded that is a possibility, depending on the project and the degree of specialization required.

Terminal

The subcommittee agreed that the terminal would be discussed in more detail after the completion of the runway.

Brendan Moore proposed having a meeting at the Tuscaloosa National Airport. Ms. Tubbs suggested that Jeff Powell (Tuscaloosa Airport Manager) could provide members with an airport presentation. Subcommittee members agreed to hold a meeting at the airport and expressed interest in hearing the presentation.

General Airport Discussion

Ms. Tubbs explained to subcommittee members that the Tuscaloosa National Airport is funded through the FAA, and that they require an RFP process to hire an engineer every

three years. Atkins North America is the current engineer. Ellis Architects will be designing the hangar but will have interaction with Atkins throughout the process.

David Pass, who also serves on the Airport Advisory Committee, provided feedback he has received from the community, mainly concerning incentivizing tee-hangars. He acknowledged that incentives may not be appropriate for Elevate funding, but stressed the importance of attracting the private sector to build or improve hangars at the airport. The Mayor stated that as the process advances, the idea of incentivizing private investment at the airport could be evaluated.

Western Riverwalk

Tera Tubbs noted that the City Council will vote on a design contract with TTL on October 1.

Corps Park

Tom Bobitt (City of Tuscaloosa) explained that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property negotiations are ongoing.

Lock Wall

Mr. Bobitt specified that the lock wall at the Oliver Lock and Dam would be obtained under a lease with the approval of the U.S. Congress. He also informed members that Congress has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the City of Tuscaloosa. The process includes surveys and appraisals, among other components, and involves two districts for the Corps of Engineers.

Ms. Tubbs proposed connecting the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater to the Corps Park with a design similar to the existing riverwalk. She prompted members to provide ideas and input for the park and lock wall design.

General Discussion

William Blakeney asked if anyone from the City of Tuscaloosa had been in contact with the owners of the former Tuscaloosa Country Club (TCC) property. Ms. Tubbs informed members that most of the riverfront property near TCC is Corps property, although one parcel is privately owned. Brendan Moore explained how the City is engaging with the owner of TCC, in an effort to be sensitive to maximize the opportunity.

Mr. Pass inquired if the owner of TCC had mentioned matching any Elevate funds to invest in the property. The Mayor responded that the city is in the cursory stages of the project, and that both the City and taxpayers will want to see a return on investment. He also noted the value of the Martin Luther King Blvd road improvement project and the potential for public and private partnership. Mr. Moore added a comment about the existing riverwalk

success. The \$5 million public investment was followed by \$100 million of private development in the area.

Russell Mumper (subcommittee member) asked if the riverwalk project should be deferred until the City knows the plans of the TCC property owner. Mr. Moore acknowledged the risk and the need for sensitivity, but explained that it could take years for full development to happen.

Mayor Maddox explained how city staff have been looking at alternatives for a bid contract for features at the Corps Park or lock wall at the westernmost termination point. He referenced the recent tour with U.S. Senator Doug Jones and the importance of flexibility for potential development.

Wilson Moore (subcommittee member) asked about the possibility of a boat ramp. Ms. Tubbs replied there had been discussion of a “marina type structure” at the lock wall. Mr. W. Moore referenced the popularity of the boat ramp on the north shore of the river, and noted that there is no public access on the south side.

Michele Coley mentioned the idea of a camp ground or RV Park for public use. She also stressed the importance of making improvements that will complement future private development. Mr. B. Moore echoed her comments and confirmed the city will be considering this point as the project develops.

Mr. Pass mentioned that the railroad along Martin Luther King Blvd is active and any improvements need to be done with public safety in mind. He also suggested that city staff and subcommittee members engage the community and garner support prior to any construction on the riverwalk. Mr. B. Moore noted that the area residents were engaged during the recent West Tuscaloosa Community Inventory and many expressed that they want access to the riverfront.

Mr. Pass also mentioned the ideas of installing a fishing pier or sandy beach along the riverfront. Attracting interest from charity groups that utilize the Black Warrior River for fundraisers was also discussed.

Mayor Maddox informed the subcommittee of the future relocation of 4th street and the KMG Chemicals plant in 2021. He also expressed his desire to see an access point other than the riverwalk, saying his ultimate goal is to have no barriers on the riverwalk: “once you are on the riverfront, you stay on it”.

State Representative Bill Poole (public guest) stated that the Western Riverwalk has the most economic development potential in the foreseeable future. He reiterated that the opportunities are boundless for both economic development and quality of life for Tuscaloosa citizens. Rep. Poole also suggested the possibility of a pedestrian bridge over the river to connect the north and south in the future.

Northern Riverwalk

Brendan Moore noted that the City Council will vote on a design contract with McGiffert and Associates on October 1.

Randall Park and Trailhead

Brendan Moore reviewed the Randall family's land donation to the city to establish the first phase of the Northern Riverwalk.

Wilson Moore inquired of the location of Randall Park and Trailhead. Tom Bobitt referenced a map of the property and showed its location behind the Residence Inn on Rice Mine Road, heading east to Northbank Plaza. Mr. W. Moore also inquired about parking. Tera Tubbs responded that parking would be located near the Residence Inn.

Ms. Tubbs described the concept of developing a trailhead and park with bathrooms and parking. Priority will be given to the trailhead, followed by the extension of the riverwalk to the east.

Brendan Moore noted the property is large and affords the opportunity to bring in many features. He informed the subcommittee that they will be able to review options from the design firm and welcomed any thoughts or input.

Mr. Blakeney asked if there was any Corps property on the north side of the river. City staff responded that there is not, and noted that only four property owners are involved in the first phase.

In response to earlier questions about the process of selecting design professionals, Mayor Maddox explained that McGiffert and Associates was selected because of their knowledge of the area and property owners. The Mayor noted there will be future opportunities to connect McWrights Ferry Road and North River to the riverwalk.

Mr. Pass inquired if there had been any consideration of security cameras on the riverwalk. The Mayor explained that all city projects moving forward would include cyber intelligence elements. Ms. Tubbs noted the advantage of having fiber optic lines located in the existing sewer lines on the property.

Rep. Poole questioned the possibility of extending the riverwalk to the east with crushed stone in order to increase the length at a lower cost in the short-term. Mr. Bobitt stated that the City will need to acquire easements in order to execute that plan. The Mayor expressed his commitment to provide a riverwalk of equal quality to the one on the south bank.

Transit Study Discussion

Russell Lawrence (Director of Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority) provided an update on the transit study Request for Proposal (RFP) and explained how the City of Huntsville was being used as a model. He indicated that the study included examining headways (the time it takes a bus to make a complete loop and start again), extension of operating hours, additional routes, and workforce transit. Mr. Lawrence informed members that it has been 25 years since the City of Tuscaloosa conducted a transit study. He said ALDOT has awarded the city with a grant covering 80% of the expected \$90,000 cost of the study.

Mr. Lawrence reviewed the transit study timeline. RFP responses are due November 27 for review. He expects the transit study to begin in January 2020 and last about nine months. He asked for two subcommittee members to volunteer to review the RFPs. Bill Ashley and David Pass volunteered.

Mayor Maddox explained his goals of linking more citizens to their jobs and creating a downtown-riverfront rapid transit. The latter will provide some relief for downtown parking and keep travel times to 5 – 10 minutes.

Tamika Alexander (subcommittee member) inquired how many people use the transit system. Mr. Lawrence responded that there are currently 350,000 annual riders.

Brendan Moore discussed community engagement, asking for suggestions of stakeholders that need to be included in the study. Subcommittee members suggested Tuscaloosa Sports and Tourism, hotels, restaurants, downtown businesses, United Way, and West Alabama Works. Mr. Lawrence suggested questionnaires and public hearings in the future. These would be held at various locations around the city and at different times of day.

A discussion was held about the branding (appearance, naming, logos, etc.) of the transit system. Mr. Pass noted the opportunity for new branding for the transit vehicles. Mr. Lawrence referenced the City of Huntsville and their rebranding as the "Orbit". He noted there could be a 6 – month lead time to change bus wraps. Federal funding will pay for 80% of the wraps.

The Mayor asked about advertising on transit buses. Mr. Lawrence informed members that the current buses have interior advertising, but the option of exterior advertising in the future is a possibility and is not prohibited by the Federal Transit Administration.

Final Discussion

David Pass was selected to address the full Elevate Advisory Council on October 24 on behalf of the Connectivity subcommittee.

The Connectivity subcommittee meeting will reconvene in January 2020.

First Name	Last Name	Signature
Tamika	Alexander	J. Almand
Bill	Ashley	Bill Ashley
William	Blakeney	W. Blakeney
Karen	Brooks	
Michele	Coley	M. Coley
Chris	England	Chris England
Russell	Lawrence	Russell Lawrence
Wilson	Moore	W. Moore
Russ	Mumper	Russ Mumper
Linda	Parsons	Linda Parsons
Dave	Pass	Dave Pass
Nicole	Prewitt	Nicole B. Prewitt
Veronica	MOORE	Veronica Moore



Meeting 2
September 25

First Name

GEORGE
John
#

Last Name

HIMMELTON
Earl

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink. The name appears to be "George Himmelton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "George" on top and "Himmelton" below it.