# COUNTY DEPARTMENT AGENDA REQUEST

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| Department: | Public Works | Presenter(s): | Philip Mallon |
| Meeting Date: | Thursday, May 28, 2009 | Type of Request: | Old Business |

Wording for the Agenda:

Consideration of the proposed alignment of Phase II of the West Fayetteville Bypass by the Public Works Department.

Background/History/Details:

The alignment for Phase II of the West Fayetteville Bypass Project is ready to be presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Staff has been working for many months to determine a route that is most suitable for the construction of the road, which will extend from Sandy Creek Road northerly to State Route 93 North.

Phase I is currently underway and is on schedule to be completed in the Fall of 2009.

This item was presented and discussed during the May 14, 2009 Board of Commissioners meeting.

What action are you seeking from the Board of Commissioners?

Vote by the Board of Commissioners to approve the recommended alignment for Phase II of the West Fayetteville Bypass.

If this item requires funding, please describe:

Not Applicable.

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| Has this issue come before the Commissioners in the past? | Yes | If so, when? | Thursday, May 14, 2009 |
| Do you need audio-visual for the presentation? | No | Back-up Material Submitted? | No |

## STAFF USE ONLY

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| Approved by Finance | Yes | Reviewed by Legal | Yes |
| Approved by Purchasing | Yes | Approved by County Clerk | Yes |
| Administrator's Approval | Yes | | |

Staff Notes:

# SPLOST Project R-5

West Fayetteville Parkway Phase II

The West Fayetteville Parkway is a proposed thoroughfare designed to reduce traffic congestion within the City of Fayetteville by providing an alternative north/south route across the County. The Parkway will provide connectivity between State Route 85 south (near Harp Road) and SR 92 north at Westbridge Road.

To expedite design and construction, the Parkway is planned in three phases. Phase I begins at Cleveland Elementary on Lester Road, proceeds north across SR 54, and ends at Sandy Creek Road between the Hospital and Hood Road. Phase II runs north from Sandy Creek Road to Westbridge Road. Phase III runs from the southern end of Phase I on Lester Road to Harp Road (the specific alignment of Phase III has not been established).

Provided below are answers to some commonly asked questions regarding the project.

1. **How long is the project?** Phase II will be approximately 4.6 miles in length.
2. **How many lanes will the new road have?** Phase II will be a two-lane road, with additional lanes provided at intersections for turning movements.
3. **What will the speed limit be?** The posted speed limit will be 45 mph.
4. **Are traffic signals included in this project?** Construction of Phase II will create intersections with several existing roads, including: Sandy Creek, Hood, Tillman, Eastin, Lees Mill and SR 92. Intersection controls for these locations have not yet been determined.
5. **What is the construction schedule for Phase II?** The project is currently in conceptual design. Right-of-way acquisition is planned to start in summer 2009 and proceed concurrently with final design. Construction is planned to begin in 2010 and should take approximate 24 months to complete. Until an alignment is finalized all schedules are tentative.
6. **What is the proposed right-of-way width?** At the beginning of the planning process a conservative right-of-way width of 120 ft was used, however further development of the design criteria has reduced the right-of-way to 100 ft. This provides sufficient width for two travel lanes, turning lanes, medians, shoulders and ditches.
7. **What is the project construction cost?** The conceptual cost estimate for Phase II is 12 million dollars. This estimate will be refined as design work progresses.
8. **How is the project funded?** Phases II is funded exclusively by Fayette County's transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).
9. **Who is the General Contractor for this project?** A contractor has not yet been determined.
10. **Is there a Transportation Plan / Traffic Control Plan for this project?** This project is one of many recommendations made in Fayette County's April 2003

Transportation Plan, and one of three projects identified as "top priority" by County and City officials on October 28, 2003. Hard copies of the 2003 *Final Report* as well the *Background Data and Issues* and *Travel Demand Modeling Technique* technical reports may be viewed at the Public Works Department at 115 McDonough Road.

11. **Will golf carts, pedestrian crossings, or bicycle paths be provided along the Bypass?** Several people provided written comment expressing desire for sidewalks, bike paths, and/or multi-use paths along the bypass. At this time there are not plans to provide such paths along Phase II of the bypass; however, the subject is being further studied as part of Fayette County's on-going Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

12. **What improvements will be made to Tillman Road and other areas of poor sight distance?** Existing roads (i.e., portions of Tillman and Sandy Creek) used for the parkway will be improved, as needed, to safely support the planned posted speed limit of 45 mph. Improvements may include, but are not limited to: horizontal and vertical curve changes to increase sight distance, minimum shoulder requirements and clear zones along pavement edges, guard rails along steep slopes, adequately sized ditches and culverts, signs, and pavement striping.

13. **Will the names of Tillman Road and Sandy Creek be changed?** Determination of appropriate street names and addresses will be studied and coordinated with a variety of government agencies, including the U.S. Postal Service and Fayette County Emergency Response Services. Staff will address this question in earnest once a road alignment has been approved by the Board of Commissioners.

14. **Can existing roads be widened in lieu of constructing the bypass?** Existing alternate routes around Fayetteville are along residential collector streets. Traffic modeling projections show increased traffic on these roads even with construction of the parkway. It is the intent of the parkway to help alleviate existing congestion within Fayetteville and accommodate future traffic demands without further impacting the character of these roads. Additionally, these roads are less direct and are not always designed for the volume or speed limits of an effective bypass. Current traffic patterns demonstrate that most drivers take the direct path through town versus following a path of multiple turns and intersections around the town center.

15. **Many comments were received relating to justification of the project. These include: why is the project being built, why is it located where it is, what will be the impact on traffic, what are the impacts to the City of Fayetteville, etc.?** Within eastern Fayette County, the existing road network requires the majority of north-south traffic to travel through the center of Fayetteville. This is due to the convergence of several major arterial roadways: Highway 85, Highway 92, Highway 314 and Highway 279. Additionally, east and westbound traffic on Highway 54 must enter the center of Fayetteville prior to turning north or south on Highways 85 and 92. This bottleneck has led to growing traffic congestion within the City and along this north-south corridor.

Accident data from the years of 2002-2004 reveal that the routes through the City of Fayetteville (SR 85 and SR 92) exceeded the statewide averages for accidents for these years and exceeded statewide averages for injuries in all years except for 2002. In 2004 these locations also exceeded the statewide averages for fatalities.

Most accidents occurring on the SR 85 corridor are on the north side of the City of Fayetteville and along the SR 85/ SR 92 corridor through the City of Fayetteville. The majority of the accidents in the study area are rear-ending accidents, while angle-type accidents are the second most common accident type. The high number of accidents and in particular the high number of rear-end and angle accidents in the study area indicate that traffic volume is a major contributing factor.

As a result, the primary purpose of the proposed West Fayetteville Bypass is to offer an alternate north-south route around the center of Fayetteville. Providing options for travelers will decrease traffic volume and congestion within Fayetteville and thus improve safety and efficiency.

16. **Does the City of Fayetteville have plans for expansion and is this project proposed to support this expansion? Is the road being constructed for developers?** Phase II is outside the Fayetteville City limits and there are no plans for City expansion along Phase II. The road is not being built for developers or to promote development. In fact, one of the key design parameters for Phase II was to select an alignment that minimizes the potential for adjacent development. This is accomplished by setting the road along property lines, where possible, and using existing topography, streams and wetlands to act as a natural deterrent against future development. (Aligning the road along common property lines helps minimizes the number of newly created parcels with no option for road access other than the parkway.)

    Fayette County, the City of Fayetteville and the Fayette County Development Authority are working on a Master Development Plan for the undeveloped land around the hospital and a portion of Phase I runs through this area. Access restrictions are being established to help protect the parkway from being impacted by the potential future development in this area.

17. **How was the preliminary alignment determined?** The preliminary alignment presented on September 16, 2008 was developed with the goal of meeting the need and purpose of the project, while minimizing the project length, cost and impact to existing properties and environmentally sensitive areas. Since September additional information has been obtained from property owners, field surveys and engineering analysis. The alignment presented on May 5th, 2009 represents the best balance of impacts, safety, access management, environmental protection, cost and functionality. These factors reflect comments received from the public since the September meeting as well as objectives identified in the ongoing Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) project.

18. **What is planned to improve access to I-85? Without improved interstate access, the bypass will have little or no positive impact.** Limited access to I-85

`is among the larger challenges facing Fayette County' transportation needs, however improving access to the Interstate it is not the objective of the bypass project. This topic will be addressed in the County's upcoming Comprehensive Transportation Plan and improvements implemented thereafter. In the meantime, Fayette County is working with the South Fulton Community Improvement District to make improvements at the interchange of SR 74 and I-85.

Regardless of interstate access improvements, the parkway will provide positive impact within and around Fayetteville in terms of congestion relief and safety improvements.

19. **Will fences be improved to help better contain cattle and keep the animals off the roads?** Improvements to fences on private property and the safe containment of livestock are the responsibility of the property owner. Parcels in which the project bisects existing fenced areas will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Temporary fences will be provided, as needed, to maintain confinement.
20. **Will fences within the proposed right-of-way be replaced?** Fences and other structures located within proposed right-of-way or easement areas will be appraised and their value(s) included in the appraisal for that parcel. The owner may then elect to replace the fence or structure on their property using the money received in exchange for the land. Fences and other structures within proposed right-of-way areas will be replaced by the County if the land is donated for the project. This scenario is common for property owners on gravel roads who donate land in order for the road to be paved.
21. **What are the noise impacts?** Potential noise impacts have not been studied. If required for wetland permitting, an assessment of noise will be included as part of the project's Environmental Assessment. No noise reduction measures, such as walls, are planned for the project other than leaving vegetation in place where possible.
22. **Have environmental issues, such as wetland disturbance, been considered? What are the mitigation costs?** Minimizing impacts to wetlands and streams are some of the key criteria used in developing the recommended alignment. Potential impacts have been quantified and the design team met with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a "Pre-Application" meeting to discuss the project and review permitting options. Mitigation costs have been approximated; the specific costs will be determined once culvert and/or bridge designs are finalized and the various options for purchasing mitigation credits are evaluated.
23. **Will this project be abandoned if another SPLOST is not passed?** No. Funding for the West Fayetteville Parkway, Phase II is exclusively from the County's current transportation SPLOST and sufficient money is available to complete this project.

24. **What are the steps towards project completion?** Listed below are the key steps for project development. At any one time several steps may proceed simultaneously.

    a. **Concept Plan Development** – The project team develops a conceptual alignment that: 1) meets design criteria, 2) minimizes impacts to properties, and 3) identifies potential environmental impacts.

    b. **1st Public Information Meeting –** Fayette County holds a public meeting (September 16, 2008) to solicit input and concerns from property owners along the conceptual route. This information is used to refine the road alignment.

    c. **Development of Staff's Recommended Alignment –** Based on input received from the 1st Public Meeting, field delineation of environmental features, and refined design parameters, the project team prepares a revised alignment for the Parkway. A notable change between the concept plan and the staff's recommended alignment is a reduction in right-of-way width from 120 ft to 100 ft. This change was made based on input received from the first public meeting and initial recommendations of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) currently underway.

    d. **2nd Public Information Meeting –** The revised alignment is present to the public on May 5, 2009. Information on the alignment is also posted on-line and is available for review at the Public Works Department.

    e. **BOC Review and Approval –** Shortly after the 2nd Public Meeting, the staff's recommended alignment will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for review and approval. BOC approval of the alignment is required before proceeding to final design.

    f. **Field Surveying Work** – In order to proceed with final design, the project team will require additional field data from the Surveyor. These data include identification and delineation of improvements on private property, topography, establishment of property boundaries, and delineation of environmentally sensitive areas. Centerline alignments, right-of-way, and clearing limits will be staked at appropriate times during design and construction.

    g. **Final Design –** The project team finalizes all design and construction documents from which the road will be permitted and constructed.

    h. **Plat Development –** Right-of-way plats are developed for each property impacted by the project. The plats document the right-of-way areas and easements required for the project. This information is needed before the appraisals are conducted.

    i. **Property Appraisals –** An independent appraiser is used to determine the Fair Market Value of properties needed for construction of the road project. Property owners are notified before the appraisal and will have the opportunity to meet with the appraiser.

j. **Right-of-Way Acquisition** – Impacted property owners are contacted by a County representative and provided a copy of the plat showing the land needed for the project and the results of the third-party appraisal. An offer is made to purchase the property for fair market value.

k. **Road Construction** – Construction work will begin upon acquisition of needed right-of-way and easements.

Please contact the Fayette County Engineering Department at 770-320-6010 for additional information on this project.

5/5/09