COUNTY AGENDA REQUEST

Department:	Commissioners	Presenter(s):	Commissioner Allen McCarty
Meeting Date:	Wednesday, May 2, 2012	Type of Request:	Old Business

Wording for the Agenda:

Further discussion of Commissioner Allen McCarty's request to halt plans for construction of Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass and to begin construction of the East Fayetteville Bypass.

Background/History/Details:

In 2004, the citizens of Fayette County approved a one-percent (1%) Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) for the purpose of funding transportation projects within the County. Among those projects were two roads commonly referred to as the West Fayetteville Bypass and the East Fayetteville Bypass.

At the Board's Retreat held on March 10, staff presented the Board of Commissioners with current revenues available for what is know as 321 SPLOST Funds, indicating that sufficient SPLOST funds for construction of both Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass and the East Fayetteville Bypass are not available. Consensus on how to proceed could not be reached, since only four of the County Commissioners were present. Based on the discussion that took place and the absence of one of the Commissioner at the Retreat on March 10, Commissioner McCarty asked that this issue be brought back to the Board for consideration at the March 22 Board of Commissioners Meeting to obtain further information, direction to staff on how to proceed, and a possible vote.

During the March 22nd meeting, Commissioner Hearn requested to table this consideration and for more information to be provided for a broader discussion at the May 2 Workshop meeting. The Board consented to Commissioner Hearn's request.

What action are you seeking from the Board of Commissioners?

Discussion of Commissioner Allen McCarty's request to halt plans for construction of Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass and to begin construction of the East Fayetteville Bypass. The Board is requested to direct staff on how to proceed with this request.

If this item requires funding, please describe:

Not Applicable.

Has this request been considered within the past two years?	Yes	If so, when?	Thursday, March 22, 2012
Is Audio-Visual Equipment Required for this Request?*	No	Backup Provided with Request?	Yes

**** All audio-visual material must be submitted to the County Clerk's Office no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. It is also your department's responsibility to ensure all third-party audio-visual material is submitted at least 48 hours in advance.***

Approved by Finance	Not Applicable	Reviewed by Legal	Yes
Approved by Purchasing	Not Applicable	County Clerk's Approval	Yes
Administrator's Approval	Yes		

Staff Notes:

16. Consideration of Commissioner Allen McCarty's request to halt plans for construction of Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass and to begin construction of the East Fayetteville Bypass.

Commissioner McCarty began his discussion by explaining that both the West Fayetteville Bypass and the East Fayetteville Bypass have long been issues of contention in Fayette County. He stated that, based on his research, the number one priority of the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) referendum was the East Fayetteville Bypass and that West Fayetteville Bypass was the third priority. He proposed that Fayette County should return to its original plans and use the SPLOST funds as the "citizens thought they were voting for". He understood that this proposal involved "complications" and that it would "take time to do", but in the meantime he further proposed that Fayette County would no longer proceed constructing Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass. He mentioned that the East Fayetteville Bypass has already started, that so far up to $600,000 had been spent on the project and that if the East Fayetteville Bypass were not completed then that $600,000 would "be lost". He added that Fayette County could get assistance from other agencies for completing the East Fayetteville Bypass while similar assistance is not obtainable for the West Fayetteville Bypass.

Commissioner McCarty moved that Fayette County cease the third phase of the West Fayetteville Bypass and make plans on starting the construction of the East Fayetteville Bypass. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hearn stated that the most current traffic study available for Phase II of the West Fayetteville indicated that around 8,000 vehicles a day would use the "northern segments" of the bypass. He then asked Public Works Director Phil Mallon if a similar traffic study had been conducted within the last three years, in

terms of estimates, on expected traffic use on Phase I of the East Fayetteville Bypass and Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass. Mr. Mallon replied that there was an updated traffic study that was designed and prepared primarily for determining the appropriate intersection controls on the East Fayetteville Bypass, that it would include information on expected traffic volumes, but that he did not have the study with him. Commissioner Hearn asked, should the Board chose to transfer monies that are currently allocated for Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass to Phase I of the East Fayetteville Bypass, would Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass be part of the upcoming Transportation Investment Act (TIA) referendum. Mr. Mallon answered that Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass was not part of the TIA referendum, but that it did have "long range federal dollars programmed for it." Commissioner Hearn then informed the Board that he was not ready to vote on the motion, and he asked if the Board would consider tabling the item until the May 2012 Board of Commissioners Workshop meeting. He noted that this motion was certainly due consideration, and that Commissioner McCarty had a memo that he wrote in 2004 with a priority list of SPLOST projects. He closed saying when that memo was written the cost to construct the East Fayetteville Bypass was estimated to be $67 million, and that there is not $67 million available in SPLOST funds today.

Commissioner McCarty asked Mr. Mallon what was the estimated cost to construct Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass. Mr. Mallon replied that staff had identified several alignments of Phase III, but since those alignments had not yet been decided upon, the estimated cost ranged from between $8 million to $12 million. Commissioner McCarty then asked how much had been spent on Phases I and II of the West Fayetteville Bypass. Mr. Mallon answered that Phase I of the West Fayetteville Bypass had approximately $8.3 million spent for it, and that Phase II had approximately $4 million spent on it for engineering, right-of-way, and construction. Commissioner Hearn noted that there are different options and different ways that the County could approach as they relate to Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass. He then briefly spoke about some options before repeating his request to table the issue until the May Workshop meeting. Commissioner McCarty noted that one option would be to delay the "whole process" so that even the East Fayetteville Bypass would be voted down and cancelled so that the remaining SPLOST money could be used to repair all necessary roads and bridges in the county.

Commissioner McCarty agreed to withdraw his motion and Commissioner Brown withdrew his second. The item was tabled until the May 2012 Board of Commissioners Workshop meeting.

Chairman Frady requested that staff prepare the figures on Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass, to look at options similar to those that Commissioner Hearn spoke about, and to look at the possibility of roundabouts with those options.

Commissioner Brown added that he and many of Fayette County's citizens would be "exceptionally" disappointed if the Board continued with the construction of Phase III of the West Fayetteville Bypass, since those citizens are still looking for a decent explanation of both Phases I and II. Chairman Frady replied that constructing the East Fayetteville Bypass would not make people happy either. Commissioner McCarty responded that the Board should consider cancelling the East Fayetteville Bypass as well in order to avoid unhappy people from all over the county. A copy of the request, identified as "Attachment 15", follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.