

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

June 2, 2014

MEMO TO: Ruffin Hall
City Manager

FROM: Eric Lamb, Manager, Transportation Planning Manager
Ben Canada, Capital Improvement Plan Manager

SUBJECT: Budget Note 10 – Potential Investments in Infrastructure at Oakwood Avenue and Tarboro Road

Members of City Council have expressed interest in contributing to streetscape improvements around the intersection of Oakwood Avenue and Tarboro Road, adjacent to St. Augustine's University. This memorandum summarizes related streetscape planning efforts and funding options.

Background

A draft study, compiled by staff from St. Augustine's University and the city in 2011, identified potential improvements along Tarboro Road and Oakwood Avenue in the vicinity of the school. The *St. Augustine's College Planning Study* included a "high level" concept plan for streetscape improvements along Oakwood Avenue, as well as the avenue's intersection with Tarboro Road. At this time, no detailed design has been developed, nor have any concepts been vetted with the public.

In 2012, staff evaluated the development potential of 36 streetscape projects around the city. Streetscape projects generally involve a wide range of infrastructure improvements along a designated corridor that can include wider sidewalks, street trees, street furniture, enhanced street lighting, utility consolidation, and transit amenities. Staff prioritized the projects based on such criteria as economic development potential, commercial property density, transit activity, and pedestrian safety. Under these criteria, the Oakwood Avenue/Tarboro Road project received a low score. City Council adopted the prioritization in February 2013. The top five projects in the streetscapes program include:

1. Hillsborough Street Phase II (Rosemary to Gardner)
2. Oberlin Road (Clark to Bedford)
3. Hillsborough Street Phase IV (Oberlin to Morgan)
4. E. Cabarrus Street (Wilmington to Chavis)
5. New Bern/Edenton (Swain to Raleigh Blvd)

Next Steps and Funding Options

Should Council wish to explore this opportunity in more detail before appropriating funds, we recommend additional evaluation of options for streetscape investment around the Oakwood/Tarboro intersection. Staff could design a more specific proposal for investing in the neighborhood. All efforts would be coordinated with the leadership at St. Augustine's University. Public outreach for a plan would also be necessary to get buy-in from the community at large.

Should Council wish to commit funding to this effort, there are at least three options:

- Option 1 – The proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes \$3.7M for streetscape projects. Of this total, \$2M is programmed for Peace Street. Another \$1.7M is programmed for the Council approved, prioritized list of streetscape projects. Council could specify that a portion of the \$1.7M be used for the Oakwood/Tarboro project.

Proposed Budget	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	5 Year Total
Streetscape Program	600,000	600,000	500,000	-	-	1,700,000
Peace St West Streetscape	2,000,000	-	-	-	-	2,000,000
	2,600,000	600,000	500,000	-	-	3,700,000

- Option 2 – There is sufficient capital fund balance in the CIP to provide up to \$1 million for a project in this area. The fund balance is the accumulated savings from projects completed in recent years. While this funding source is available, appropriating these funds now leaves less funding available for next year's capital planning process, and leaves less available for unanticipated needs.
- Option 3 – Another option is to not appropriate funds at this time, but allow staff to apply the programmed funding (\$1.7M) to the prioritized list of streetscape projects. The FY15 and FY16 funding would be applied to the Oberlin Road project, which has completed public involvement and nearing plan adoption. At a future date, should there be any project savings from Oberlin Road, as well as Peace Street West, could be reprogrammed to Oakwood Avenue.

Should Council choose to designate funding for this project, staff will update the five year CIP, and corresponding ordinances, to reflect Council's direction.