

**TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM  
2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR CITY HALL  
SEPTEMBER 29, 2009—5:45 PM**

Committee Members Present: Dave Kirlin, Chairman  
Councilman John Howren  
Councilman Keith Tidwell

Additional Members Present: Councilwoman Brenda Craig  
Councilman Dale Burkett

Guests: Mr. Jason Field, Consultant  
Mr. Bill Gray, P&N Railroad  
Mr. Brett Wallace, HDR Engineering  
Mr. Steve Carroll, HDR Engineering  
Mr. Brian Thompson, HDR Engineering

The City Council Transportation Committee met on Tuesday, September 29, 2009. Chairman Kirlin called the meeting to order.

**Item 1. Closing of Ida and Park Avenue Railroad Crossings**

Mr. Jason Field, consultant for the NCDOT Rail Division, presented the P&N Re-Activation Crossings Study. Mr. Field answered questions from both committee members and the public regarding the NCDOT's request to close the two railroad crossings in Gastonia. Mr. Field explained the request to close the crossings was proposed out of concerns for community safety and vehicular traffic.

The Committee heard comments from eight area residents of the proposed railroad crossing closures, as well as various staff members regarding public safety and other issues. Mr. Bill Gray, Piedmont and Northern Railroad, also provided comments and answered questions. A summary of affected residents' comments and concerns obtained at a community meeting on September 22, 2009, was provided to the Committee.

**The Committee took no action at this time as this was presented for informational purposes only. The Public Hearing is scheduled for October 6, 2009.**

**Item 2: Piedmont and Northern Rail Line Cost Study**

Mr. Jim Palenick, City Manager, advised the Committee that a Piedmont and Northern (P&N) Commuter Rail Opportunities Assessment had been conducted in order to provide a preliminary cost estimate of linking Downtown Gastonia to Downtown Charlotte via commuter rail. Mr. Brett Wallace, HDR Engineering, presented the findings of the Assessment Study. Mr. Wallace provided both a low (\$265 million) and high (\$335.2 million) estimate to convert the P&N Rail Corridor to commuter rail use. The range between the low and high estimate costs covers

multiple variables including design speed, right-of-way acquisition, and a shared-use agreement with CSX Transportation.

**The Committee took no action at this time as this was presented for informational purposes only.**

**Item 3. Municipal Agreement for Railroad Protection Devices at Modena Street and Grover Street – Project No. WBS 42725:**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Rail Division is proceeding with the reactivation of the Piedmont & Northern (P&N) Railroad track from the Norfolk Southern Railway in Gastonia to the CSX Railroad in Belmont. As part of the reactivation, NCDOT plans to install crossing gates and signals at the railroad/highway grade crossings at Modena Street and Grover Street. These locations previously had such devices when the track was active approximately 18 years ago.

NCDOT has requested the City enter into a Municipal Agreement for installing the railroad protection devices at these two intersections. The NCDOT would pay the total cost of installation, including the cost of necessary signage and pavement markings. The City would be responsible for half of the annual maintenance costs of the two installations (\$2,280 per crossing), per year, for the term of the contract.

The Assistant City Attorney has reviewed the proposed agreement and anticipates a mutually agreeable resolution with the NCDOT prior to the next City Council meeting.

**The Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend approval of the municipal agreement as described above.**

**Item 4: Other Related Business**

Having no other business Chairman Kirlin adjourned the meeting.