

FINAL PUBLIC MEETING - Thursday February 22 for Cumberland Avenue Study Corridor

The final public meeting for input on the Cumberland Avenue Corridor Study will be at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, February 22 in the University Center Ballroom. Ed McKinney, project manager for the Glatting Jackson Kercher consultant team, will make the presentation and field questions from the audience. The study began last fall with a series of public and stakeholder meetings and design charrettes resulting in preliminary plans presented in January.

The plans show Cumberland Avenue Corridor transformed by a new three-lane configuration from Twenty Second Street to Seventeenth Street, wider sidewalks, street trees, room for bikes, street furniture, removal of overhead utilities on Cumberland, on-street parking and bus stops. In addition, a reconfigured Mountcastle Park would connect the University to Cumberland Avenue and Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center and address the desire for new high quality public space while setting the stage for additional mixed-use development opportunities.

The work of the consultants has been overseen by an advisory committee of diverse area stakeholders appointed by the Metropolitan Planning Commission with input from Mayor Bill Haslam and UT Chancellor Loren Crabtree. "A vital, thriving and well-designed Cumberland Avenue is important to the health of the City of Knoxville," Mayor Haslam said. "It's an important corridor linking downtown not only to the University of Tennessee but also to our neighborhoods in West Knoxville. But we want it to be more than just a corridor to travel through. We want Cumberland Avenue to be a place where people want to stay to live and work and shop. And this study will help us get there."

"We're grateful to everyone who participated in this process and the city will be looking carefully at how to turn this plan into a reality," Haslam added.

At the public meeting, consultants will focus on how to implement the recommendations of the study. "We'll be looking at the necessary first steps as well as overall costs," said Jeff Welch, director of the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization, "This is not a pie in the sky plan; the transformation could begin as soon as the current downtown I-40 improvements are complete."

The study area for the urban design component is from Seventeenth Street to Twenty Second Street and from Clinch Avenue to Lake Avenue. The study area for the transportation analysis includes a broader area from I-40 to the north, Neyland Drive on the west and south and Henley Street to the east in order to assess the potential impacts that changes to Cumberland Avenue may have on the surrounding street system. The study is funded in part through an agreement with the Tennessee Department of Transportation and will be completed by the end of March.

For more information contact Jeff Welch at 215-2500 or visit www.knoxmpc.org/cumberland .