

## **Downtown North/I-275 Redevelopment Public Meeting Set July 8**

The City of Knoxville along with the Metropolitan Planning Commission and Knoxville's Community Development Corporation will host a public meeting Tuesday, July 8, on planned improvements for the Downtown North/I-275 Redevelopment area.

The meeting is set for 5:30 p.m. in the Knox County Health Department Auditorium at 140 Dameron Avenue.

Of particular interest will be plans for revitalizing the North Central Street which are scheduled to begin later this summer.

"What we want to do is present some ideas aimed at revitalizing and changing the North Central Street area to make it more attractive to residents and to businesses there," said Bob Whetsel, the city's director of redevelopment, "and we want to get some feedback from people who live and work there about our plans."

The Central Avenue corridor is part of the city's Downtown North/I-275 Redevelopment Area where the city is seeking to expand the successes it has seen in downtown Knoxville to the north.

"This is an area that a lot of people have expressed an interest in living or operating businesses in and the city, in terms of infrastructure and other areas, wants to help this area thrive," Whetsel said.

Among the topics of the meeting will be an overview of the Downtown North area and various programs available to help with the redevelopment effort.

Those include the city's Façade Improvement Programs; a description of the Downtown North /I-275 Redevelopment and Urban Renewal plan; zoning ordinances and enforcement; plans for the I-275 Business Park Road and a proposed Downtown North Streetscape Program.

The Downtown North area is roughly defined by Depot Street on the south, I-275 to the west, Woodland Avenue to the north and Hall of Fame Drive on the east.

North Central Street and Broadway are the main thoroughfares.

The first step is work along North Central.

The goal is to make North Central more of a mixed-use zone with offices and some residential and retail elements facing the street. The plan would also seek to make the street more pedestrian friendly.

To achieve that the city, MPC and KCDC are looking at rezoning to change the current commercial zoning along the corridor to a mixed use commercial and residential zoning using a form based code. There is also a road diet plan that would reduce North Central Street to two through lanes with turn lanes at signalized intersections from Broadway to Woodland.

Narrowing the street would allow for increased public parking and also create a street with slower traffic that would be friendlier to pedestrians and bicycle riders.

Sidewalk improvements are also part of the proposed North Central package.