



**Date:** August 24, 2012

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager  
**Through:** Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Mark D. Ahrendsen, Transportation Director  
H. Wesley Parham, Assistant Transportation Director

**Subject:** Hopson Road (U-4716B, U-4716A/C) Municipal Agreement

**Executive Summary**

The N. C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is scheduled to implement the Hopson Road railroad grade separation project near NC 54. Project bidding begins November 20, 2012 with construction completion scheduled for April 2015. The project includes closing the Church Street at-grade railroad crossing at NC 54 near Morrisville, track realignment, and the extension of Church Street (Keystone Park Drive) to Hopson Road. The purpose of the project is to improve safety, efficiency and mobility in the area around Hopson Road and Church Street. As part of the project, the City requested the inclusion of new sidewalks along the Church Street extension portion of the project. This requires the City to agree to reimburse NCDOT for up to 50% of the final actual cost of the sidewalk construction. The estimated sidewalk cost to the City is \$22,500.00. A map of the overall project is provided in the Figure 1 attachment.

**Recommendation**

The Department of Transportation recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute the Hopson Road (U-4716B, U-4716A/C) Municipal Agreement with the N. C. Department of Transportation for sidewalk construction at an estimated cost of \$22,500.00. The agreement is provided as Attachment A.

**Background**

NCDOT plans to eliminate redundant and/or unsafe at-grade rail-highway crossings on a statewide basis as part of a comprehensive effort to improve and promote safer and more efficient rail and highway operations along heavily used railroad corridors. Based on statewide data, NCDOT has determined that a grade-separated crossing is required at the at-grade crossing on Hopson Road (SR 1978) located between Davis Drive and NC 54. The project also supports the Piedmont Improvement Program, an initiative by NCDOT, the Norfolk Southern Railway (NS), and the North Carolina Railroad (NCR) to improve passenger and freight railroad operations along the NCR Piedmont Corridor from Raleigh to Charlotte.

The proposed project was recommended for and included in the State and MPO Transportation Improvement Programs with funding anticipated from a variety of sources, including Federal Rail Administration (FRA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

grants. A federal Environmental Assessment (EA) was then prepared by NCDOT with FHWA as the lead agency. The process included both public and agency comments. The EA was subsequently approved by FHWA on September 2, 2009. The selected preferred alternative included track realignment, closure of the Church Street at-grade crossing (at NC 54 and the Durham County line), the realignment of a portion of Church Street, Church Street extension to Hopson Road, and the Hopson Road grade separation. The project then became eligible for funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 through a grant agreement between NCDOT and the Federal Rail Administration (FRA). With FRA as the lead agency, the EA was revised and updated in December 2011 with no significant change to the project. A project map is provided in Figure 1. The project design is complete and construction bidding is scheduled for November 2012.

### **Issues and Analysis**

Per NCDOT policy, the State will provide sidewalks along the Hopson Road Extension project if the City covers 50% of the added cost, including all administrative costs, associated with the sidewalk construction. Upon project completion, the City will assume the ongoing sidewalk maintenance and liability. As currently planned, the project will include approximately 1,500 linear feet of sidewalk extending along each side of Church Street from Park Knoll Drive north to Hopson Road. The sidewalks will provide sidewalk connectivity from the Keystone Park developments to the Hopson Road corridor. The total estimated cost of the sidewalks is \$45,000.00 and the estimated cost to the City is \$22,500.00.

The project will also require the relocation and adjustment of City utilities located within NCDOT right-of-way. The related costs, terms and conditions for the municipal utility relocation are covered in a separate NCDOT Utility Agreement.

### **Alternatives**

- Authorize the City Manager to execute the Municipal Agreement for the Church Street Extension Sidewalk (Project U-4716B, U-4716A/C) at an estimated City cost of \$22,500.00.
- Do not authorize the execution of the Church Street Extension Sidewalk Project. The proposed new sidewalks will be removed from the project design and construction. Any existing sidewalk removed or adjusted with project construction will be replaced at no cost to the City.

### **Financial Impact**

Upon completion of the project, the City is responsible for reimbursing NCDOT 50% of the final actual cost, including administrative costs, of the work associated with the sidewalk construction. The estimated cost of the sidewalks is \$45,000.00 and the estimated cost to the City is \$22,500.00. Alternatively, the City is requesting the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO allocate a portion of the MPO's Federal Surface Transportation Direct Attributable (STP-DA) funds toward the cost of the sidewalks. If this request is approved by the MPO, the sidewalk costs will be funded with 80% (\$36,000.00) STP-DA funds and a 20% (\$9,000.00) City match. The required City matching funds are available in the City's Capital Improvement Program's Federal-State Matching Project.

### **SDBE Summary**

NCDOT municipal agreements require that their contracting procedures be followed for these projects. The Department of Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance did not review this item for compliance with the Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.