

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(1)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: February 18, 2003

TITLE: **Public Hearing: Plan for Roberson Street Improvements**

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES <u>X</u> NO <u> </u>
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Minutes of February 4 Meeting C. Proposed Cross-Section for Roberson Street D. Illustration of Increasing Right-of-Way (ROW) Width from 40 Feet to 68 Feet E. Preliminary Construction Estimate	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Dale McKeel – 918-7329

PURPOSE

On February 4, 2003, the Board of Aldermen held a public hearing on a proposed plan for Roberson Street improvements. After hearing the staff report and public comments, the Board requested additional information and continued the public hearing to the February 18 meeting. Staff has met with two affected property owners and prepared the information requested by the Board. The Administration recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the attached resolution adopting the Plan for Roberson Street Improvements (Attachment A).

INFORMATION

The right-of-way width on Roberson Street is currently 40 feet. On the section of the street between Sweet Bay Lane and South Greensboro Street, there is no curb and gutter, and the pavement width varies from about 22 feet to 28.5 feet.

Based on the recommendations in the Downtown Carrboro: New Vision report, Town staff has prepared a proposed cross-section for Roberson Street, between Sweet Bay Lane and Greensboro Street (Attachment C). This proposed cross-section includes 11-foot vehicle travel lanes and, on each side of the street, an 8-foot on-street parking area, a 5-foot planting strip, and a 10-foot sidewalk. The roadway width from curbface to curbface of the proposed cross-section is 38 feet, and the right-of-way width is 68 feet. Please note that when the plan is implemented the overall right-of-way width may be reduced to less than 68 feet if necessary to minimize impacts to existing structures. Attachment D illustrates increasing the existing 40-foot right-of-way to a 68-foot right-of-way.

If the Board of Aldermen adopts the plan, it is recommended that a follow-up worksession be held to discuss how to implement the plan. Improvements to Roberson Street can be discussed with other projects for consideration and prioritization at the upcoming worksession on capital needs.

On February 4, the Board of Aldermen reviewed the proposed cross-section for Roberson Street, heard citizen comments, and requested additional information (see Attachment B). Responses to these requests are as follows:

1. Response to Mr. Jeff Rubish's Questions. Town staff have met with Mr. Rubish to discuss the proposed cross-section. At the public hearing, Mr. Rubish asked (1) how much the improvements would cost and who would pay and (2) how much parking would be gained and lost. Answers to these questions are provided below.

Mr. Rubish also asked whether a new traffic signal would need to be installed at the intersection of S. Greensboro and Roberson streets. A new traffic signal might be warranted at this intersection regardless of whether improvements are made to the street. The cost of a signal would probably be borne by the N.C. Department of Transportation.

2. Construction Cost Estimate. Henry Wells of Sungate Design Group has prepared a Preliminary Construction Estimate of \$194,034 for improvements to Roberson Street based on the proposed cross-section (Attachment E).

Mr. Wells notes that this estimate is very preliminary in nature and does not include right-of-way acquisition; removal of structures or above ground utilities; relocation of underground electric, telephone, gas or CATV; or landscaping other than reseeding. The estimate also includes costs of storm drainage structures which are needed regardless of whether other improvements are made to Roberson Street, at an estimated cost of \$61,200.

3. Right-of-Way Cost Estimate. Town staff estimate that the cost of purchasing property to increase the right-of-way width on Roberson Street from 40 feet to 68 feet could range from \$138,000 to \$173,000. The widening would require the purchase of approximately 16,450 square feet of property. The low-end estimate is based on a review of the assessed values for properties with frontage on Roberson Street, and the high-end estimate is based on purchase prices exceeding assessed values by 25 percent. The estimate does not include legal or other transaction costs.
4. Effect on Tax Rate / Other Funding Strategies. For the current fiscal year, one-cent on the tax rate generates \$105,386. If the cost of Roberson Street improvements is \$367,034 (\$194,034 for construction and \$173,000 for right-of-way), the effect on the tax rate would be 3.48 cents, assuming the current tax base and that the improvements are paid for in one year through property tax revenues.

There are other strategies that can be explored to pay for the improvements. For example, the Town could seek funding through the federal Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP), which is intended to fund projects that promote improved community livability. The municipalities of Concord and Charlotte recently received \$2.7 million and \$991,000, respectively, through direct congressional appropriations under this program.

5. Implementation. As stated in the February 4 abstract, the adoption of the Roberson Street plan will provide guidance to Town of Carrboro staff as proposals for development adjacent to Roberson Street are discussed and reviewed.

With the adoption of the plan, applicants proposing development on Roberson Street could be requested to dedicate right-of-way and construct the improvements. However, it should not be assumed that new development on Roberson Street will be required to provide the right-of-way and construct the improvements called for by the plan.

For example, the conditional use permit for the Old Farmer's Market Building, approved in December, requires that the building be set back from Roberson Street to reserve the right-of-way for future improvements. The applicant was not required to dedicate this right-of-way to the Town. The applicant did agree to provide sidewalks along Roberson Street.

6. Gained/Lost Parking. It is anticipated that the proposed cross-section would provide approximately 35 on-street parking spaces on Roberson Street. This estimate assumes that some of the driveways on the north side of the street are removed as part of off-street parking consolidation efforts.

It is estimated that the implementation of the plan would also remove approximately 20 off-street parking spaces that are currently provided. This number is difficult to estimate due to the somewhat informal parking arrangement on some properties.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the attached resolution (Attachment A) adopting the Plan for Roberson Street Improvements.