

City Officials Town Hall Meeting

9/10/13 Summary by Jay Carlson

On Tuesday 10 Sept, District 5 (Huntsville) Councilman Will Culver held a neighborhood town hall at Edgewater. The Town Hall was to brief area residents on the Zierdt and Martin Road expansion projects.

In addition to Mr. Culver, in attendance were: Majors Tommy Battle (Huntsville) and Troy Trulock (Madison), D.J. Kline (Madison City Councilman), Kathy

Martin (City of Huntsville Engineer), Shane Davis (City Huntsville Urban Planning & Development), Les Hobson (ALDOT Pre-construction Engineer), John Hamilton (COL Ret, Chief of Staff for Mayor Battle), Scott Leach (Garver Construction Co, Planning & Design Engineer).

Shane Davis discussed the funding for the two projects--a combined \$60M start to finish. Funding is sufficient (no shortages) and available for the projects starting in budget year 2014 (this Oct 1st). He said the schedule has not changed, contrary to earlier news reports. He also explained why Mayor Battle had wanted to shift the ATRIP funds, and why he could not in the end. He said even if the ATRIP funds had been reallocated it would not have impacted the construction schedule for Zierdt or Martin Roads. He explained it took the Federal Government red tape 2 years to transfer the land needed for the Right of Way for the north-bound Zierdt Road lanes. This spring we saw the Army contractor harvesting timber of value (required by federal regulation for an easement). In 2014 the majority of the work on Zierdt will be focused on the "clearing & grubbing" of the remaining trees and brush along the new right of way. Current effort is thinking through the coordination of the two interrelated projects to minimize the impact on the entry and access and use of the roads by residents and commuters.

Kathy Martin briefed on the program schedule. It is anticipated the state will take 8-10 months to go through the "Land Acquisition and Easement" negotiations and purchases needed for the construction zone. The intersections at Martin and Madison Blvd are to be built first allowing the roads to be tied in as they are completed. Speaking of intersections all will have double left turn lanes to expedite traffic flow under the green arrow.

Ground breaking for Zierdt will start in 2015 and is planned for completion at end of summer 2017. Zierdt will be a 4 lane divided boulevard design with a green-way and 12 foot-wide multi-use path on the west side.

Schedule at a Glance:

- **2014** – clearing and grubbing of trees and brush along the new right of way. "Land Acquisition and Easement" negotiations and purchases needed for the construction zone.
- **2015** – Groundbreaking for Zierdt Rd. begins
- **2016** – Work continues
- **2017** – Zierdt Rd. construction completed by end of summer

New Zierdt at a Glance:

- 4 lane divided boulevard
- Green-way and 12' wide path on west side
- All intersections with Zierdt will have double left turning lanes

Ground breaking for phase 1 of Martin (Arsenal Gate 7 to James Record Road beginning in 2014 and will finish by fall 2016. Phase 2 will take Martin across Wall Triana to Laracy Drive. Martin Road will be 5 lanes wide (center turn lane) with sidewalks that will tie into the green-way path at Zierdt.

Scott Leach explained that Zierdt and I-565 will have room for 6 lanes under the bridge. The multi-use path will pass under on the west side of the bridge piers. He also confirmed that the high tension poles (other than the few in front of Edgewater property) will not be moved because of the cost (in the millions of city tax dollars) and because of the engineering required to keep them under perfect tension. There are no additional traffic signals planned for either road project.

Councilmen Culver and Kline have committed to help design soft-scape (landscaping) to take some of the visual edge off the poles being in the center versus the road side. Given the timing of the project we have time to influence this and get it into the respective city budgets.

For those that may have read about the Kellner Road project that will eventually span from Wall Triana to Zierdt by way of Intergraph (parallel to I-565). The engineers have not even begun to design the project. It was a late approval to the ATRIP list. Concept is to allow access to the remaining 500 acres of farmland behind the Preserve/Edgewater/Mountain Brook to commercial/retail development.

If you have questions about specific of the project they gave out the City Engineer's phone number 256-427-5300