
**CITY-COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES FOR
SMITH REYNOLDS AIRPORT/WHITAKER PARK
STRATEGIC AREA PLAN
MARCH 12, 2020**

Steve Smotherman gave a presentation on the draft plan.

Jack Steelman asked if there was a proposed timeline for implementation of the plan and where that would start.

Steve Smotherman replied that the first step would be to conduct a transportation and telecommunication assessment to find out what improvements need to be made, then to hire someone to do a comprehensive streetscape plan. At that point, the hope would be to get some cost estimates and understand what it will take, and then take it before City Council.

Kirk Ericson stated that some thorough conversations have taken place with key leaders who would be in charge of the various plan objectives to make sure they get implemented, including Mark Davidson with the Airport Authority, Mark Owens from Greater Winston-Salem, Inc., and Evan Raleigh and Kyle Haney, who are respectively over Economic Development with the City and the County. The document that Steve handed out at Work Session includes an implementation schedule that contains respective timeframes for those objectives being delivered to the community.

Chris Leak stated that he has gotten calls from residents, and the theme of those conversations is that residents do not want to be left behind or forgotten in the planning process as this goes forward, that the surrounding community is remembered. Chris reiterated that the whole purpose of the plan is to pull the community up and not to leave it behind.

Kirk responded that staff has been mindful of trying to strike a balance within this plan as it pertains to economic development, paying special attention to the citizens who are in the area that are going to feel traffic impacts and other impacts from growth, and finding a way, through some of the programs mentioned previously, to bring local citizens along through retraining and prioritization for new jobs as they become available.

PUBLIC HEARING

FOR: None

AGAINST:

Eunice Campbell, 5743 Antietam Drive, Winston-Salem 27106

- I am speaking today as a North Ward resident, someone who is very concerned that this project would leave out a lot of our citizens. I have looked at this thoroughly, I have printed out the plans myself and read through them. I know there are a lot of things that are not decided today, but one of the things that is a major concern to a lot of the citizens in the area is the proposed closure of Indiana Avenue at Akron Drive. I would like to say that

using the proposed Perimeter Point Boulevard as an alternate route is not a good idea. That is pretty much a service road that turns off of Indiana Avenue and could not hold the traffic. Indiana Avenue is two lanes in either direction, with a center turning lane, and making people turn on that particular service road to get to Patterson Avenue is not a good idea. So I speak in opposition of that as a solution for the extension of Shorefair Drive, even if it's necessary.

- We have to remember that Indiana Avenue is a direct route from the north side of Winston-Salem to Patterson Avenue and on to the east side of Liberty Street. When those types of decisions have to be thought about, I just want to make sure that you, as a board, understand that we, the north side residents, use that road daily, and to us it would be like shutting off University Parkway.
- I have no problem with economic development, we just want to make sure that we are included. There are companies that have expressed concerns that they would be closed off from that area. I stand for them today, and just want to make sure that we are not left behind.

Kirk Ericson mentioned that staff has been aware of the potential road closure and have heard citizen comments at public meetings concerning the potential closure. Kirk stated that the recommendations of this plan aren't predicated on that closure happening or not happening. The methods for success that have been discussed in the plan would be achievable either way. There are further meetings to be held that will discuss the fate of that potential road closure. Kirk asked Jeff Fansler to provide more information on this project.

Jeff stated that there is a new road facility proposed as an extension of Shorefair Drive that currently cul-de-sacs and is directly in line with Akron Drive, and that there is anticipation that one day, there would be access to Akron Drive via the new extension of Shorefair Drive. It would be an intersection signalized at Indiana Avenue. The road closure comes due to the railroad. In our past history of working with them, they do not allow new at-grade railroad crossings without closing another existing crossing. That would result in the closure of Indiana Avenue south of where the new road and Indiana would intersect. The road plan is still in the early stages, and more public input is scheduled. Some meetings are being re-scheduled due to weather. Jeff stated that WSDOT was still pursuing the connection and that it would not include just the closure of Indiana Avenue, but rather the closure of Indiana Avenue with alternate improvements to handle the re-routed traffic.

Chris Murphy stated that, in addition to public meetings and citizen involvement on the planning of this road, any future closure would be subject to a public hearing before City Council, which Jeff confirmed.

Melynda Dunigan asked for clarification of the language in the report, that the road closure is something being considered and not necessarily proposed by the plan. Kirk confirmed this and Melynda suggested that staff seek to further clarify this language in the plan.

Johnny Sigers left the meeting.

Janet Robinson, 3120 Flanders Drive, Winston-Salem 27105

- I live in the North Ward area. A lot of the planes that have started coming over our neighborhood are really noisy. When I first moved there in 1977, Smith-Reynolds was there and it was very noisy with the planes coming over my area. I adjusted to that noise, and after Smith-Reynolds ended passenger service, they didn't have all those planes coming in and out. But now, hearing this plan, I'm thinking about my neighborhood and the impact that it's going to have.
- I was here for the other cases and heard you talking about Meadowlark and the noise and the traffic, and concessions were made for that neighborhood, but it seems to me that you are not concerned with what's going to happen in our neighborhood with the noise and traffic. That is a really big concern of mine. Like I said, I have been here since 1977, and I would like to leave my home to my children or my grandchildren.

Kirk stated that there is language in the plan about considering the impacts of any expansions to existing businesses or creation of new businesses in the area on the residential areas many of which are historic and good community assets with a lot of long-term residents that the City will want to preserve. Kirk added that the plan is not talking about a return to passenger flights at Smith-Reynolds Airport, but it instead focuses on companies that specialize in drone use, aviation maintenance, and training and education. The anticipation is that there will not be the same level of noise and intensity as back in 1977 when Smith-Reynolds was taking in a lot of passenger flights.

Steve Smotherman stated that the goal of the plan is not to increase the number of flights at Smith-Reynolds, but to increase the curb appeal and to have a nice experience for folks who do fly into Smith-Reynolds, with the hope that they may want to locate or relocate to the area.

WORK SESSION

MOTION: Jack Steelman moved approval of the *Smith Reynolds Airport/Whitaker Park Strategic Area Plan*.

SECOND: Tommy Hicks

VOTE:

FOR: George Bryan, Melynda Dunigan, Tommy Hicks, Chris Leak, Brenda Smith, Jack Steelman

AGAINST: None

EXCUSED: None

Aaron King
Director of Planning and Development Services