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COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE  
Department of Community Development  
MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Supervisors  
FROM: Jack M. Kelsey, PE – County Engineer  
DATE: 19 April 2005  
SUBJECT: Meadow Creek Parkway; CATEC Impacts

On 5 May 2004 the Board of County Supervisors of Albemarle County adopted a Resolution of Intent to endorse the design of the Meadow Creek Parkway and pedestrian/bike trail, and the limits for proposed public land and public easement, as presented in the Design Public Hearing for VDOT Project: 0631-002-128, C502, B612, B657 (see attachment). Condition #3 of the resolution states that a 3 meter [9.8 feet] planting strip will be provided between the curb and sidewalk on both sides of the four-lane divided portion of Rio Road to provide a visual transition into the Parkway.

On 21 September 2004, VDOT conducted an informational presentation on the Meadow Creek Parkway project to the CATEC Board of Directors, who expressed their concern for the impacts to their parking lot and bus routing. Mr. Greg Krystyniak (VDOT project manager) in his letter dated 10-08-04, informed me of the meeting results. He requested that I review the parkway plans and consider reducing the width to the 3 foot minimum for a utility or grass strip. This review was conducted and I responded (11-17-04) by providing two alternatives demonstrating that the planting strip recommended by Jones & Jones and included in the Resolution of Intent could be maintained by reconfiguring the parking lot and bus circulation (see attachments).

The CATEC Board expressed their concerns and provided their recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors in their letter dated 15 March 2005 (see attachment). Their concerns included 1) loss of safety buffer between the roadway and parking/bus circulation; 2) loss of parking spaces and impacts to bus circulation route; and 3) disruptions to school operations and student safety during construction. Their recommendations included 1) use of only a 2 foot wide grass strip; 2) use of guardrail or earth mound to create a physical buffer between the sidewalk and the parking/bus routing; and 3) the establishment of a reduced speed school safety zone around CATEC. In the paragraphs that follow I will address these concerns and recommendations.

#### Loss of Safety Buffer

The CATEC Board expressed concern for the loss of a safety buffer between the street and the parking/bus routing. Unfortunately, the recommendation for a 2 foot grass strip places the pedestrians at a significantly higher risk from the street where the traffic volume and travel speeds are much greater than within the parking area. When considering the improvements in this area, the risks to pedestrians posed by vehicular movements on either side must be balanced. Both alternatives I presented consider that balance by providing the planting strip width recommended by Jones & Jones and a reasonable separation (6ft. or more) from the parking/bus routing.

### Parking/Bus Routing Impacts

Alternatives #1 and #2 (see attachments) realigned the bus routing so that the general circulation pattern remained the same. The parking area was then reconfigured to replace the parking spaces eliminated by the realigned bus route. In addition, future ingress and egress to CATEC will be greatly improved with the new access road and traffic signal, at the new intersection with the realigned Rio Road (South), which will be built with the Parkway.

### Disruptions to Operation

As with any road project the temporary disruption of the “normal” traffic flow and patterns is unavoidable. To minimize this disruption the improvements will be planned and the construction sequenced to assure public safety as well as adequate ingress and egress to adjacent properties during construction.

### School Reduced Speed Zone

School related reduced speed zones with flashing signs, which indicate a reduced speed while school is in session, are allowed by VDOT. An example is the portion of Hydraulic Road in front of the Albemarle High School. These requests are handled by the County Transportation Planner (Mr. Juandiego Wade) who coordinates the review and approval by the VDOT offices in Charlottesville and Culpeper. Factors considered in the review of these requests include, but are not limited to, the street classification and the results of a speed study. If travel speeds are an immediate concern for the CATEC Board, staff may initiate this review based on the current conditions rather than waiting until the Meadow Creek Parkway and Rio Road improvements are constructed.

In summary, the two alternatives that I have generated address the concerns raised by the CATEC Board. Although the additional site improvements will increase the cost of the Meadow Creek Parkway construction, they will allow for a transition from the urban 4-lane divided Rio Road to the Meadow Creek Parkway that is true in form to the Jones & Jones design recommendations and condition #3 of the Resolution of Intent. At this time staff needs to instruct VDOT how to proceed with the final design plans for the Parkway. However, the issue is complicated by the vision the County has for this portion of the parkway and the impacts to a public facility and the related cost implications of adhering to that parkway vision. Staff would appreciate direction from the Board of Supervisors on how to respond to this issue.

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Attachments (refer to the executive summary)