

Cumberland Avenue Corridor Study Public meeting Set for Thursday January 25th

At 6 p.m. Thursday, January 25 in University Center Ballroom, consultants working on the redesign of the Cumberland Avenue Corridor will present updated drawings and plans that are the result of traffic studies and public input from several recent meetings. Working with dozens of ideas generated by citizens, residents, business owners, students and other area stakeholders, a team led by Glatting Jackson Kercher will offer the public a chance to refine the plans for this key part of Knoxville.

"Three days of meetings at the University Center in December really helped us explore specific ways to approach the Cumberland Avenue transformation," said Jeff Welch, director of the Transportation Planning Organization. "Some creative and exciting opportunities for the future of the area are emerging as we make Cumberland Avenue more attractive and multi-modal."

The purpose of the study is to create a more inviting, vibrant and safe Cumberland Avenue, which serves as the major traffic corridor for the University of Tennessee, Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center and the East Tennessee Children's Hospital. The avenue is also a gateway to downtown Knoxville. The goal of the study is to enhance the connections to the UTK and area employers and improve the residential and retail character of the district while effectively moving pedestrians, motor vehicles and bicycles.

Components of a new Cumberland Avenue Corridor to be presented at the January 25 meeting include such things as wider sidewalks and better parking, more trees and landscaping, a wider range of retailers and eateries, bike routes, increased traffic safety, improved public gathering places, varied types of residential housing and upgraded intersections.

"People in Knoxville have given us a pretty clear indication of the type of place they want this urban corridor to become," said Ed McKinney, project manager for Glatting Jackson Kercher. "The next step will be to chart a course for making that vision happen."

The boundaries for the urban design study area is from Seventeenth St. to Twenty Second St. and from Clinch Avenue to Lake Avenue. The transportation analysis covers a broader area from I-40 to the north, Neyland Drive on the west and south, and Henley Street to the east in order to assess how changes to Cumberland Avenue may affect the surrounding street system. The project is funded in part through an agreement with the Tennessee Department of Transportation and the study is scheduled to be concluded in March 2007.

For more information contact Jeff Welch at (865) 215-2500 or visit MPC's website: www.knoxmpc.org/cumberland.