

### The MPO Plans to Push Tuscaloosa Forward

Northport, Al-The Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) discussed the upcoming Greenway Project at their meeting on Monday, Oct. 31. The Greenway Project is a part of Tuscaloosa Forward, which was set up after the April 27 tornado to renew and rebuild Tuscaloosa.

The path of the Greenway Project will be called the Path of Remembrance and Revitalization, and will be similar to the pathway of destruction left from the tornado. There is no set path as of right now but discussions to determine the exact location are ongoing.

Joe Robinson, the city engineer of Tuscaloosa and Technical Coordinating Committee, has been a key player in the Greenway Project.

“A lot of folks out there are hurting and we’re going to see what we can do,” Robinson said.

Along the path will be one or two memorials to those who were killed, injured or affected by the tornado. The pathway will have bicycle and walking paths. Residents in the Woodlake and Forrest Lake areas are concerned that the walkways will be in their backyards. Judge W. Hardy McCollum, who was standing in for the Mayor of Tuscaloosa Walt Maddox, spoke up about the residents concerns.

“The biggest concern is that residents don’t want walkways in their backyard,” Judge McCollum said.

To help combat the resident’s worries the current plan calls for several plants set up alongside the pathway to separate private property and walkways.

The Greenway Project would allow people to travel to different parts of the city and interact with members of other communities. According to the Tuscaloosa Forward website the pathways could help to promote people to be active and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

The MPO also unanimously voted to change the classification of Fifth Avenue East/Sixth Avenue East/Dr. Edward Hillard Drive from Campus Drive to 15<sup>th</sup> Street East from a small-scale road to a large-scale road. Because of the change in classification the road can be expanded. Five feet will be added on both sides, which will allow for more lanes and room on the road. The board said they are hoping that this will help to decrease the amount of traffic Tuscaloosa residents face everyday.

In other news:

-Mayor Robert Herndon of Northport was reappointed as committee chairman for the MPO in a unanimous vote.

-The Tuscaloosa Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan amendments were approved in a 5-0 vote.

-The amendments to the Tuscaloosa Area MPO Fiscal Year 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program were approved in a 5-0 vote.

-The Environmental Protection Agency will review ozone pollution standards in 2013.

Sources:

-Joe Robinson, the city engineer of Tuscaloosa and Technical Coordinating Committee chairman

-Tuscaloosa Forward: Greenway Project

<http://tuscaloosa.com/DocumentView.aspx?DID=2658>