

Utilities Commission Workshop

November 13, 2019

Commissioners Present Chairman William Biedenbach, Secretary -Treasurer Lillian Conrad, Vice Chairman Jack Holcomb, Lee Griffith, Counsel Thomas Cloud, General Manager Joe Bunch; and Assistant Secretary -Treasurer James Buddy Davenport (via phone)

Others Present Pond & Company (Architects & Engineering) had 4 representatives and UC Staff included Director of Engineering Julie Couillard, Water Director Dave Hoover.

The published Agenda was amended by the workshop presenters to:

1. Workshop Scope and Goals
2. Presentation Discussion Items
3. Recommendations for next steps
4. Commission Direction/Concurrence.

1. **Workshop Scope and Goals - To share the direction of the Western Utility Complex (WUC) Plan.**

2. **Presentation** Julie Couillard, with assistance from Pond & Co representatives presented a detailed [Powerpoint](#) (click on preceding link to view in total) The main points are detailed below.

A. Overview of UCNSB Near Term and Future Needs at WUC

- New uses within WUC site will include: Transmission & Distribution/System Operations, warehouse/procurement, water resources field operations
- New solar arrays will be placed closer to the new Florida Power and Light (FPL) Substation and may be set in the wetlands
- Proposals include new UCNSB Headquarters location, water collection/reclaimed augmentation and reverse osmosis plant
- Near term: well field expansion of 3 wells moved from east of FPL corridor to west of the FPL corridor and relocation of fleet operations from Swoope site to the WUC

B. Land Use Assessment/ Valuation of the Western Utility Complex

- Estimated value of the approximately 47 acres is approximately \$2.3 M (\$49, 383 /acre)
- Market analysis points to land use demand for 400 apartment units, 100 assisted living units and 22 acres non-residential space through 2035.
- The forecasted net revenue, if improved, through 2035 is \$13,350,000.

Presenters Note: a Holiday Inn is scheduled for construction in the southwest corner of the I-95 and SR44 quadrant in 2020.

C. Headquarters move versus Current Office Building (COB) renovations

- Several slides documented the Community Redevelopment Area studies of 2010, 2013 and 2014 summarizing the need for appropriate Infrastructure, facilities improvement, moving the UC out of downtown while retaining a customer service department in the downtown area. Staff reported 89,000 walk-in business office customers during 2018.
- Statistics demonstrate a new building makes economic sense, with savings of over \$2M based on estimated cost of renovation of current COB (Current Operations Building) \$11.6 M as compared to new building at WUC of \$9.5M. Renovation of COB would include asbestos abatement expense, relocation of employees during renovations, updating air quality, etc. These factors contribute to the cost analysis.

D. Future Williamson Blvd Route options

- **Route A** would create least impact on wetlands, lessens impact of noise on adjacent residential community, and follows the existing FPL corridor. **However**, it runs close to the Walmart access to SR44, which apparently presents a potential problem with the FDOT in terms of optimizing distance between traffic signals.
- **Route B** would have signaled intersection farther away from current Walmart signal that could make FDOT approval simpler. **However**, it will have greater impact on wetlands, require longer internal roads for UC use that may create further negative impact on drainage and require longer utility runs. It runs closest to neighboring residential developments with potential to create issues with traffic noise. Further, it reduces contiguous building area/ponds area for UC use and the UC access roads that would be used to access a proposed park in the SE corner of site.
- **Route C** offers less impact on wetlands, signaled intersections along SR44 that are farther apart than option A that should make FDOT approval easier. It lowers noise impact on neighboring residential developments as compared to option B. **However**, UC facilities would be closer to Williamson Blvd with reduced buffer from the road, UC access roads would be potentially longer as compared to Option A, and finally, it would reduce contiguous UC building area/pond area.

UC Staff recommended “Route C” and said it could take 1 to 10 years to complete

3. Recommendations for Next Steps

- Land Use –keep property for UCNSB use
Critical infrastructure (current and future) buildings, water assets, utility scale solar installations, and security needs
Retail pricing does not support sale
- Continue to pursue combined fleet facility opportunities with City
- Headquarters Location –New Building at WUC
- Williamson Blvd. Route –Finalize preferred route (B or C)
Move forward with County to develop agreements for land use, construction plans, etc.

4. **Commissioner Comments** Chair Biedenbach stated that this was the clearest explanation for the WUC and that the fog has been lifted. Vice Chair Holcomb, staunch fan of SR44 development, adamantly stated that the future is in the Western complex. Further he acknowledged that the process appears more transparent than ever before. He mentioned several times that the financials presented by Pond & Company are very, very close to his experience with his businesses on SR44.

Commission Direction/Concurrence At the next UC meeting on November 25th 2019, a motion will be made to proceed with building a new Utilities Headquarters at the Western Utilities Complex site (using 132 of total 952 acres) located North of SR44 and west of I-95, adjacent to Shoppes at Coronado (Walmart, etc) and I-95 to the east and Venetian Bay to the west. UCNSB use for this property includes water assets (including reverse osmosis plant), utility scale solar installations and buildings for UC operations. The future motion also pursues combined fleet facility opportunities with the city, and it finalizes a preferred route for “Williamson Blvd” along with developing agreements for the land use, construction plans, etc. with the County.