

Regal Cinema to be upgraded in path of proposed Hillsdale Drive extension written by Newspack Team | May 1, 2009

By Brian Wheeler

Charlottesville Tomorrow

Friday, May 1, 2009

Regal Entertainment Group announced plans today to build a major upgrade to its Regal Cinema 4 theater behind the K-Mart shopping center. Plans include expansion into the parking lot to add five additional screens, new stadium seating & digital projection equipment. However, the existing theater had been expected to be demolished, at least in part, to make way for the \$30.5 million Hillsdale Drive Extension project connecting Hydraulic Road through the Seminole Square shopping Center to Hillsdale Drive.



*Location of theater and proposed Hillsdale Drive Ext. in
Fall 2008 project update newsletter (click to enlarge)*

As

Charlottesville Tomorrow reported in November 2007

, the

Hillsdale Drive Steering Committee

was told then that Regal officials were “disappointed to see the alignment shift through their property, but they understood it as a business decision.” Apparently, Regal has made a business decision of their own to move ahead with an upgrade. Sufficient state and federal funding is not expected for the Hillsdale Drive project until 2015 at the earliest. Part of Hillsdale was identified as a “shovel ready” project for which Charlottesville has sought federal stimulus funds.

“We were aware that there was talk of a road project either near or on our property,” said Russ Nunley, Regal’s Vice President of Marketing & Communications in an interview with Charlottesville Tomorrow. “We are unaware of where that project stands with respect to location, timeline and approvals.”



The City of Charlottesville’s Angela Tucker has been a key member of the team coordinating the Hillsdale Drive Extension project. Tucker told Charlottesville Tomorrow that she had not been in contact with Regal since early 2008 and that she only learned today about the company’s plans to expand the theater at its current location.

"It would be unfortunate if we couldn't work together to anticipate this road coming through the site," said Tucker. "We thought it would be an outdated theater or a partner which we could work with on redevelopment. However we are not yet authorized to proceed with the right of way acquisition." Tucker said that since Hillsdale Drive is still in the preliminary engineering phase, any right of way negotiations would be premature.

Regal's Nunley said that his company had been looking for several years for the right place to place a modern theater in Charlottesville. "We have talked to developers, evaluated all the options, and ultimately decided to move forward with our existing land in order to expedite the process," said Nunley. "It would be terrific if the proposed road project enhanced access to our facility." Nunley said Regal would be applying for the necessary permits from the City immediately but that no schedule had been set for construction.

The expanded and remodeled facility will be called the "Regal Seminole Trail Stadium 9." Nunley said the goal is to give moviegoers the amenities they are looking for today, including stadium seating, high-back recliner seats, and digital projection systems.

The City has been working with Whole Foods to design the southern terminus of Hillsdale Drive at Hydraulic. The Terrace Triple Theater was previously demolished to make room for that project. Tucker said that the work for the Whole Foods project had been significant and that its plan would "dictate the rest of the road alignment to a certain degree." Tucker said the City planned to hold a design public hearing on the Hillsdale Drive project in late 2009.

