

# Corridors Commission Meeting

Observer name: Max Puchalsky

Agency: Corridors Commission, Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government

Date: Sept. 21, 2023 | Noon - 1 PM

See more about this meeting at:

<https://www.lexingtonky.gov/meeting-notices/19546/corridors-commission-meeting>

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- **The Scene**

- The Corridors Commission Meeting took place on Thursday, September 21, 2023. It began at 12:04 PM in the Government Center's 5th-floor conference room located at 200 E. Main St., Lexington, KY 40507.
- **Commission members (voting) in attendance:** Council Members James Brown (chair), Denise Gray, Jennifer Reynolds, and Whitney Baxter; Lane Boldman, Hunter Pace, Elizabeth Pattengill, Kathleen Franklin, and Amy Sohner.  
**Non-voting commission members in attendance:** Jennifer Carey, Joseph David, and Chris Ford.
- **Others in Attendance:** Gabriel Thatcher, Jessica Pence, Sharon Murphy, Mark Yanik, Stan Harvey, Jordan Sebastian, and Hilary Angelucci.
- **Notable Absences:** Council Member Preston Worley
- The mood was relaxed. It was one of the commission member's birthdays. Tacos were served from Cinco de Mayo, a local Mexican restaurant.

- **Community Perspective**

- There was no public comment period. No other members of the public were in attendance.

- **Goals**

- [AGENDA](#) (please note, "page 5" is not actually missing, the pages were mislabeled in the original document)
- [FY2024 Budget Update](#)
- The purpose of the [Corridors Commission](#) is to assess the major roads of Lexington-Fayette County, especially the major and minor arterials, regarding but not limited to aesthetic qualities, viewsheds, landscaping, fencing, signage, litter control, bike and pedestrian considerations and other elements the Commission may deem appropriate.

- **Policies & Outcomes**

- The previous [meeting's minutes](#) were moved to approved by Council Member Brown, seconded by Council Member Gray, and unanimously approved.
- Updates on FY2024 Budget items, Ongoing and New Projects
  - Quarterly maintenance

- The commission reviewed quotes from horticultural contractor Pack's Nursery (Agenda, pp. 6-10). The quotes total \$41,400, slightly over the \$40,000 maintenance budget and an increase from \$39,000 last year. The projects include \$70,000 for Town Branch Commons maintenance, \$29,400 for Newtown/I-75 horticultural bed maintenance, and \$15,000 for Leestown Median Maintenance ([FY2024 Budget Update](#)). Jennifer Carey, Director of the Division of Environmental Services, recommended the Corridors Commission proceed and award contracts to Pack's Nursery. Council Member Brown entertained a motion to accept bids as presented. The motion was made by Council Member Reynolds, seconded by Council Member Baxter, and passed with unanimous approval.
- After the vote, it was revealed that the maintenance quotes do not include watering as that would have increased costs.
  - Director Carey suggested that the Commission may need to issue a separate request for watering quotes to keep beds watered, for example, during a drought.
- North Broadway Greening
  - Stan Harvey and Jordan Sebastian of Lord Aeck Sargent, the architecture and design firm, presented a feasibility assessment of the N. Broadway Medians (Agenda pp. 11-25). Their proposal includes adding three medians covering four intersections along N. Broadway: Dover Rd., Southgate Dr., Northgate Dr., and Linwal Rd. The Commission had initially recommended a focus on vertical impact such as trees and banners, but the density of intersections creates limitations for vertical impact so as to preserve driver and pedestrian sightlines.
  - Jordan Sebastian, a landscape architect, noted the proposed plan will involve excavation of the road to make space for the width of the median (Agenda, p. 16). The light green sections represent the shortest-growing plant material such as groundcover or annuals. The dark green portions represent shrubs up to 3' high. The yellow sections are areas amenable to trees and taller shrubs, yet are also difficult to mow. Notably, trees cannot be more than 4" caliper in diameter, so the City needs to be mindful in their selections to avoid fast-growing trees. Pack's Nursery has provided a plant palette with suggestions and options for each tier (Agenda, p. 21). The architects also provided hardscape options such as stamped concrete, pavers, and various light poles and banners that are designed to break away for safety. Before and after mockup images of

each median are available in the meeting documents (Agenda, pp. 23-26).

- On the relatively high speed of the road, necessitating medians, Jordan Sebastian noted, **“I walked all of these, along each side and down the middle, and I was not comfortable”** (audio, 31:51). There was a suggestion that the City widen the medians and Brown responded that instead of widening the medians, the City may narrow the lanes and add dedicated bike lanes and walking paths. Indeed, there is funding at the State level to do that, but “it’s not on [the Department of Transportation’s] radar to do anytime soon” – Council Member Brown (audio, 34:20)
- Praising the plan, Council Member Gray said, **“As someone that is representing on this board or the commission that is representing this area, someone that’s living this area, basically all my life. This is such a great start to beautify this area because the north side of Lexington does feel overlooked by the city. And this is showing that side of town that we actually do care. And we do want to beautify all parts of Lexington. So this is a wonderful, wonderful, as I call it, a great start.”** (audio, 38:24)
- Next steps: The Corridors Commission voted unanimously to proceed with the Encroachment Permit process and the issuance of a Construction Contract.
- Next on the agenda was an update on Manchester St. presented by Council Member Jennifer Reynolds.
  - This area has lots of traffic and features new businesses like the Manchester Hotel, the Distillery District area, and The Burl, which is expanding. There is also the Town Branch bike trail
  - According to Council Member Reynolds, many residents and businesses feel there hasn’t been enough investment by the City in the area, which is a major tourism draw for Lexington.
  - The top priorities of businesses and residents in this area are:
    - Arches that say “Distillery District” will go from one side of the grass over the street to the other side on Newtown Pike and Manchester. The arches will be bigger than the current sign and will need State approval, although, the State knows the City is working on it.
    - More pedestrian lighting
    - More wayfinding signs – for example, “distillery district that way”, and indicating the Rupp area, and other points of interest.
    - Fence repair, including working with local artists to do murals on the fence

- Adding a crosswalk. The City is working with the State on this. Residents are interested in colorful crosswalks to draw attention to the area.
  - McConnel House facelift
    - A full renovation would be very expensive, so they are looking at quick facelift options such as a new door.
  - Additional parking
  - Ways to make the area safer and more beautiful. The businesses feel disconnected from downtown and Town Branch, like they didn't get the same attention as downtown businesses.
- Next, Eve Miller Wallingford presented on Upcoming ZOTAs and Major Roadway Corridor Ordinances (Agenda, pp. 22-28)
  - The Division of Environmental Services, in coordination with the Division of Planning, is undergoing a review of Zoning Ordinances related to landscaping. They are updating standards, including the Planting Manual, and several outdated ordinances. Three ordinances, in particular, are being considered: Article 18 (Landscaping), Article 26 (Trees), and Article 6 (Street Trees) with intent to repeal all seven of the landscape ordinances.
  - Next step: The proposal will go to the planning commission. If supportive, then text changes will begin following the ZOTA process.
- The next meeting of the Corridors Commission will take place on October 19, 2023, however, the Commission may schedule a separate meeting regarding the forthcoming [Typology Study](#).
- Unanimous approval to adjourn at 1:05 PM.
- **Follow-Up Questions**
  - Given the [drought](#) Lexington experienced this summer, why is watering not included in the horticultural bed maintenance plan?
  - How were the Manchester St. findings determined regarding resident priorities? The report seemed heavily skewed towards business interests and generating tourism.