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CITY PLAZA CONSTRUCTION SET TO BEGIN IN OCTOBER

Now that the new downtown convention center is complete and open for business, City of Raleigh officials will now turn their attention to constructing the City Plaza.

Located in the 500 block of Fayetteville Street near the convention center, the City Plaza will be a gathering place configured to accommodate a number of public events, including parades, markets and shows. It will not obscure the view along Fayetteville Street between the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts and the Capitol.

Construction of the \$14.8 million City Plaza is expected to begin in mid-October, with completion in October 2009. The City of Raleigh will be erecting and “wrapping” the fencing around the City Plaza when the construction begins. This wrap will indicate to visitors the project in progress and offer wayfinding to pedestrians to get around the construction site.

The design of the City Plaza seeks to create a public gathering place that reinforces Raleigh’s image as being one of the most livable cities in the country. North Carolina artist Jim Galluci is designing light towers that will allow for varying levels of light for a variety of events. Other design elements of the City Plaza include flexible seating, an interactive water fountain, planters, new waterproofing, and trees. Also, TSO Fayetteville has agreed to construct and lease four glass retail pavilions on the City Plaza. TSO Fayetteville owns the land where the City Plaza will be located, and has granted the City of Raleigh an easement to construct and operate the plaza.

The design of the City Plaza was a collaborative effort of the City of Raleigh; the City’s Arts Commission; the City’s design consultant, Kimley-Horn and Associates; and the Project for Public Spaces, a New York-based firm specializing in the analysis and design of public gathering spaces. The City Plaza design was developed with considerable input from the public and from City boards and commissions at design workshops in the fall 2006

Additionally as part of the City Plaza project, vehicular traffic will be allowed to traverse the 500 block of Fayetteville Street and connect with Lenoir Street. Fayetteville Street is being extended to Lenoir Street as part of Phase II of the Fayetteville Street Renaissance Project. The \$5.36 million extension is nearly complete.

Phase I of the Fayetteville Street Renaissance was completed in July 2006 and involved reopening the 100-400 blocks of the Fayetteville Street pedestrian mall to vehicular traffic and converting Martin and Hargett streets to two-way thoroughfares. The Fayetteville Street Renaissance is an economic development and revitalization effort for the downtown street.