

INFORMATIONAL ITEM: PROJECT UPDATES

A. Hot Spot Program – An RFQ for FY 2016 Hot Spot Transportation Impact and Feasibility Studies was released in December 2015 with a qualifications submission deadline of January 8th. Two projects have been identified and include: 1) a functional design for the NC 55 Holly Springs Bypass, and 2) an interchange reconstruction alternatives analysis for I-440/U.S. 1/U.S. 401 (Capital Blvd). Consultants for each study have preliminarily been selected. The studies are anticipated to begin in March of 2016. (Staff Contact: Bret Martin)

B. 54 & More Study – A feasibility study is underway to investigate the costs and impacts of proposed facility upgrades to the NC 54 Corridor from NC 540 to Northwest Maynard Road, within the Municipalities of Morrisville and Cary, including roadway widening, intersection improvements, improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit services, potential railroad grade separations, crossing consolidation, proposed rail transit, and proposed railroad expansion plans for freight, intercity passenger rail and commuter. A DRAFT report has been released for review and comment. (Staff Contact: Alex Rickard)

C. Transit Systems Planning – The Wake Transit Plan Open House was held for the general public at the Raleigh Convention Center on December 8, 2015 from 4:00 until 8:00 pm; and it contained various exhibits of transit technologies that would be servicing the communities throughout Wake County within 10 year period following a successful referendum in November 2016. As addressed in the Wake County Transit Investment Strategy Report, the final Plan envisions connecting “the region across county lines, connecting all Wake County communities to the transit network, providing frequent, reliable urban mobility to the densifying areas of the County, and giving enhanced access to transit across Wake County. This will be accomplished by the tripling of bus service in Wake County, investing in commuter rail and bus rapid transit infrastructure to enhance speed and reliability for transit customers, and focusing on improving the transit customer experience”. Adoption of the Wake Transit Plan will occur between the Wake County Board of Commissioners, the GoTriangle Board of Trustees, and the Capital Area MPO’s Executive Board during the spring of 2016. Wake County staff continues to make presentations to the public regarding the draft plan. (Staff Contact: Shelby Powell or Kenneth Withrow)

D. Raleigh-Cary Rail Crossings (RCRX) Study – The MPO is partnering with NCRR, Norfolk Southern, Triangle Transit, NCDOT Rail Division, City of Raleigh, and Town of

Cary to conduct a corridor safety and mobility study for the rail corridor between Gorman Street in Raleigh and NE Maynard Road in Cary. The study will address the need for safety and/or access improvements at the existing and proposed at-grade and grade separated rail crossings, as well as some land use and economic analysis elements and station area planning. A team led by Kimley Horn Associates was selected to lead this study. A successful first round of public meetings was held on November 17-18, 2014, with targeted stakeholder interviews conducted those same days. Another round of public meetings was held March 16-18, 2015 at the NC State Fairgrounds, where the public was invited to review several recommendations for the transportation network, including options for grade-separating, closing, or improving existing crossings. The project staff is currently reviewing the draft report for the study, and efforts to plan the final project endorsement activities. A presentation will be made to the TCC at its March meeting, and the MPO Executive Board will be asked to conduct a public hearing at its April meeting to satisfy the TSS requirements of the study, and to endorse the recommendations in the study. Please see www.rcrxstudy.com for more information. (Staff Contact: Shelby Powell)

F. Southeast Area Study - The Southeast Area Study is the MPO's third area study following the Southwest and Northeast Area Studies. The study area will encompass the southeastern portion of Wake County including the Town of Garner and portions of the City of Raleigh and the western portion of Johnston County including the towns of Clayton, Archer Lodge, Wilson's Mills, Smithfield and Selma. The next Core Technical Team (CTT) meeting is scheduled for March 10th. More information can be found on the project website at www.southeastareastudy.com (Staff Contact: Alex Rickard)

G. Regional Freight Plan Study - The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, in cooperation with the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHCMPO), and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has hired the consultant services of Parsons Brinckerhoff to develop a Regional Freight Plan for the Triangle region. The proposed study is jointly funded by the agencies as mentioned above. The partnership recognizes the importance and need for these agencies to jointly address freight issues in the region. The purpose of the plan is threefold:

- To conduct a comprehensive regional study of freight, goods movement, and services mobility needs;
- To develop a framework to proactively address freight and goods movement mobility needs and challenges in our region; and
- To examine all modes of a freight transportation system with emphasis on trucks, rail and air cargo and to develop freight recommendations for the 2045 joint Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

It is envisioned that the proposed plan will guide freight investments in a manner that supports the region's goals for safety, social equity, economic productivity, sustainability, and livable communities. The project team will include the staff from the funding partners and will also include the consultant team project manager, other consultant team members, and other regional staff chosen for their subject-matter expertise. Finally, the consultant team will work with key private- and public-sector stakeholders and create a Regional Freight Advisory Committee throughout the study process.

The Steering Committee meeting held on December 17, 2015 addressed several items; which included provisions from the recently passed "Fixing America's Surface Transportation" (FAST) Act. The Steering Committee also discussed how to incorporate freight goals and objectives into the 2045 MTP. The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, April 14, 2016. (Staff Contact: Kenneth Withrow)

I. LAPP – LAPP FFY17 Project Management Training is scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 2016 from 9:00 am -12:00 pm. This training is required for all FFY17 Project Managers. Project Managers from prior year projects are also invited to the training. This year's training includes expanded information on ROW. Additionally, the end of March is six months into FFY16 so existing projects should be close to reaching authorization to construct (most were construction projects). Project Managers should contact the MPO with project updates, particularly if behind schedule or experiencing other issues toward implementation. Questions regarding the LAPP Program can be submitted to Danna Widmar at Danna.Widmar@campo-nc.us. (Staff Contact: Danna Widmar)

J. (SRTS) John Rex Endowment Grant Award Update - As of the December 18, 2015 SRTS Subcommittee meeting, UNC Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) staff reported that they have held steering committee meetings at all five of the schools that are participating in the John Rex Endowment project. Along with the "common threads" found for each of the schools and their respective local government staff members is the need for sidewalks to the schools and greenway access. HSRC staff members also met with local government staff members in October and November, 2015 to conduct a "Policy Audit" to understand existing municipal policies and practices for pedestrian safety. Finally, HSRC staff has launched the project website as <http://saferouteswakecounty.org/>. The website was created to focus first on serving the needs of those involved in the project, but also broad enough that others who visit the site looking for SRTS info in general may find something useful. Activities have been done at all of the five partner schools in the form of steering committee meetings to create school action plans. The first action plan was presented on Wednesday, January 27 at Northwoods Elementary School in Cary; with additional action plans to be completed at the remaining four schools in the coming months. Finally, HSRC staff are working on a document titled, "Policies,

Plans, and Practices for Child Pedestrian Safety: State of Wake County” which was presented before the SRTS Subcommittee at their February 5 meeting. The document is still in draft form and will be finalized this spring. (Staff Contact: Kenneth Withrow)