

Project Updates (DCHC MPO Board 5/07/20)

- US 15-501 Corridor Study
 - 2050 MTP
 - CTP Amendment #2
-

US 15-501 Corridor Study

The consultant, WSP, has completed the conceptual designs and final report, which includes a more easily accessible summarized report, recommendations and an implementation plan. However, there are three areas in the corridor that are still under discussion and awaiting a final decision, including:

- Chapel Hill cross-section – The Town of Chapel Hill did not support the six-lane cross section with RCIs (reduced conflict intersections; also known as superstreets) plus bus lanes (total of eight lanes) proposed in the Study because the Town considered the design inappropriate for this urbanizing section. Dr. Joseph Hummer studied US 15-501 (from S. Columbia St. to I-40) and presented an alternative on 4/7/20 that was based on evenly spaced traffic signals to control the traffic flow and several RCIs. The Town of Chapel Hill will review this alternative and provide a response. No date was set for that response.

An agreement on this cross-section is important not only for finalizing the Corridor Study, but also for the upcoming SPOT submittals and TIP U-5304, which has construction designated in 2028.

- Northern Quadrant Road – Mayor Hemminger, Town of Chapel Hill, sent a letter to the DCHC MPO Chair (dated 2/17/20) that requested removal of the northern quadrant road from all MPO plans because the roadway would cross a Natural Heritage Area and the relatively high cost of the roadway/bridge made it infeasible. This proposed road is to connect New Hope Commons and Eastowne using a bridge over I-40. Meanwhile, the consultant proposed another alternative in which the roadway alignment was placed further south to reduce the impact on the Natural Heritage site. The City of Durham, Durham County, Town of Chapel Hill and DCHC MPO met on 4/14/20 to discuss the roadway, the outcome of which was for the MPO and consultant to review finer details of the area, e.g., stream beds, to ascertain if there is a way to connect the quadrants and further reduce impacts on the Natural Heritage site. In anticipation of a follow-up meeting, staff is pulling together additional information on proposed development in the northwest quadrant, Natural Heritage designations and a table summary of the pros/cons of including the quadrant road. Also, the Town of Chapel Hill/UNC Healthcare discussions of developing this site are on hold.
- Interchanges vs Intersections – The owners of New Hope Commons hired a design company and attorney to work with the DCHC MPO to change the proposed grade separation at Mt. Moriah Rd. to an improved intersection. The owner's representatives, City of Durham, NCDOT and the

MPO met on 4/8/20. The owner's representatives argued that the grade separation would significantly reduce the value of the property because the new entrance, i.e., Southwest Durham Drive, would be too inconvenient, and proposed a phased approach in which first an improved intersection is constructed and then an interchange later. NCDOT did not consider the phased approach feasible because U-6067, i.e., interchange project, is to start construction in 2029. The representatives will consult with the owner and contact the DCHC MPO.

The release of the final US 15-501 Corridor Study will likely move to August 2020 given the time needed to resolve the issues identified above and the fact that the DCHC MPO Board typically does not meet in July.

2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Current activities include the following:

- Network Analysis -- Local planners finished making changes to the network using the on-line tool.
- Community Visualization – Local planners finished making land use and development status changes to the CommViz online tool. However, at the time of this writing, we still needed to check the status of Chatham County, Person County and Roxboro.
- Employment Analyst – This task was to start in April 2020. TJCOG and the DCHC MPO will meet to discuss how to set up the data and the online application. Local planners can expect to dedicate time to this task from June to August 2020. The late start is not expected to impact the MTP schedule.
- Public Engagement – DCHC MPO and CAMPO have discussed a joint public engagement effort. CAMPO will draft a plan. DCHC MPO will contact local partners for goals and visions from recent local planning efforts and help in identifying stakeholders, e.g., local transportation commission.

The MTP schedule:

- Approve schedule and public involvement plan – August 2020
- Update Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures – October 2020
- Approve Socioeconomic Data (SE Data) for 2050 MTP use – January 2021
- Approve Triangle Regional Model (TRM) for 2050 MTP use – January
- Generate Deficiency Analysis and Needs Assessment – March 2021
- Release Alternatives Analysis – May 2021
- Release Preferred Option – September 2021
- Release Air Quality (AQ) Conformity (if required) and final report – December 2021
- Adopt 2050 MTP and AQ report – February 2022

Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) – Amendment #2

The DCHC MPO and NCDOT intend to amend the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) to ensure the recent changes to the Complete Streets implementation plan and the 2045 MTP are properly reflected in the CTP. These changes include side paths along major roadways, high capacity transit

corridors and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. The City of Durham malware and the COVID-19 work-at-home situation have delayed this amendment.

The CTP Amendment #2 schedule:

- Release CTP Amendment #2 – August 2020
- Conduct public hearing – September 2020
- MPO Board adopt CTP Amendment #2 – October 2020
- North Carolina Board of Transportation (NC BOT) approve CTP Amendment #2 – November 2020