2011 NC Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Summits Yield New Priorities

In early 2011, NCDOT hosted a series of statewide workshops to set some new priorities for bicycle and pedestrian safety. The workshops held in five locations across the state were facilitated by ITRE staff, and gave participants an opportunity to identify problems and emerging concerns around bicycle and pedestrian safety. The safety summit began with the distribution of an on-line survey with more than 16,000 responses. Over 90% of survey respondents agree that having a safe bicycle or pedestrian network contributes to their personal well being and quality of life.

From all this input, seven major initiatives emerged:

1. Fully Implement Complete Streets
2. Address Multi-Modal Funding
3. Retrofit Existing Facilities
4. Require More from All Road Users
5. Increase Public Awareness through Education
6. Connect Transportation and Land Use
7. Improve Laws and Strengthen Enforcement Process

The Board of Transportation has received an initial report on the Safety Summit, and will begin considering implementation strategies over the next several months.

4th Annual Mayor’s Bike Ride

Biscoe Mayor James Blake hosted his annual bike ride, attending were Congressman Larry Kissel representing the 8th District of North Carolina, Central Park staff, Town citizens and staff, PTRPO staff and others. The route was about 6 miles through and around the Town of Biscoe. There were about 15 people that joined the ride on May 18th to help celebrate National Bike to Work Week. National Bike to Work Week is part of National Bike Month, and celebrates bicycling for transportation and recreation. If you would like to host a Mayor’s ride during National Bike Month or any other time, let us know.

Mayor James Blake, Hanna Cockburn and Congressman Larry Kissell before the ride. Photo: Laura Morton
Regional Sustainability Plan Working Groups Formed

The Piedmont Triad Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Project (SCRPP) officially kicked off May 3rd, 2011. Over 100 people attended the key partner’s kick-off meeting to learn about the project and find out how to participate. Local leaders, project team members and representative from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Environmental Protection Agency discussed efforts to improve sustainability. One of the subsequent steps in the planning process after the kick-off was to form working groups around topic areas to address sustainability policy and projects. These working groups have been formed around the following topic areas:

- Support Systems
- Development Pattern
- Healthy Communities
- Housing
- Mobility Systems
- Economic/Workforce Development
- Green Infrastructure
- Climate Adaption & Energy
- Implementation

The SCRPP is a three year plan funded by HUD, EPA and USDOT. If you are interested in participating in a work group or to learn more about the project, please visit: www.triadsustainability.org

Do You Remember the Battle of Swift Island Ferry Bridge?

In December of 1927, the US War Department conducted a series of tests to evaluate the use of bombing runs, artillery shells and mines to dismantle a relatively new bridge crossing the Pee Dee River on NC 24/27/73. This epic event was commonly referred to locally as the Battle of Swift Island Ferry Bridge. Do you have a story passed down about this event? Are you willing to share it with others?

If so, please contact:
Lance Metzler, Montgomery County Manager
(910)576-4221, extension 325
lmetzler@montgomerycountync.com

2011 Triad Commute Challenge

If you haven’t yet pledged to try a different form of transportation during 2011’s Triad Commute Challenge, you have until July 9 to sign up. Organized by Triad Air Awareness and the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) the annual challenge was kicked off April 9 with a Commuter Dash at Bur-Mill Park in Greensboro. Nearly 4,000 people have taken the Triad Commute Challenge pledge as of June 30. You can pledge online to try a different form of transportation just once before July 9 to have your commitment included in this year’s results. You can ride the bus, bicycle, walk, car or van pool or telecommute. The organizers are hoping to beat the nearly 4,000 pledges received last year. There are several prizes that are drawn weekly for participants in the Commute Challenge; the best prize of all will be your contribution to help clean the air.

www.partnc.org/challenge.html

Interested in crash data? The Piedmont Triad RPO now has access to the latest crash data through the Traffic Engineering Accident Analysis System (TEAAS) run by the NCDOT Transportation Mobility and Safety Division. We can tabulate crash rates or other data for intersections, corridors, counties, regions or municipalities. We can also provide you a crash diagrams, property damage and the severity of crashes. Please let us know if there are specific areas of concern.
State Budget Transportation Highlights
The State budget survived the Governor’s veto in mid-June. Important changes are summarized below. Refer to the Budget section for the full details.

- Small construction and contingency funds (Section 28.6) appropriates $7M annually divided among 14 Highway divisions for small construction projects and $12M annually statewide for rural or small urban highway improvements and transportation enhancements including safety, industrial access and pedestrian walkways. These funds are not subject to county allocation formulas.

- State street-aid (Section 28.10) changes the way the motor-fuel tax is distributed under the Powell Bill, allowing municipalities to receive ½ of funds on or before October 1 and the other ½ of funds on or before January 1 of the following year. There are no changes to the formula, except towns without any local roads will not receive funds anymore. In addition, municipalities are not allowed to accumulate more than 10 past allocations of Powell Bill, but can petition up to allow up to 20 allocations if the combined allocations are not sufficient to complete any projects.

- The legislature has asked for a “comprehensive evaluation” of the North Carolina Railroad Company (Section 28.12A) addressing valuation of assets, economic benefits, value to the people of the State and whether the State owned railroad should be sold, transferred or maintain its existing structure.

- The legislature has decided to formally weigh in on any rail projects that require more than $3M in matching funds (Section 28.15) or $3M in funds for maintenance and operation over a 25 year period. If costs are $3M, the Appropriate Committee will review; if the value is over $5M the General Assembly must act to support the matching or operational funds.

- More flexibility for leveraging state funds for public rural transportation (Section 28.18) is established. There is also a call for the Public Transportation Division to study the feasibility of consolidating regional transit systems (Section 28.21).

- Funding for the State Bicycle Committee was eliminated saving $2,000.

- The budget eliminates the cap on public-private partnerships in litter removal and State-owned rest areas (Section 28.3). There are now no limits on the number of design-build projects (Section 28.4). There is also a section that increases DOT privatization (Section 28.9) for maintenance, service and engineering contracts.

SAFETEA-LU Reauthorization. The federal transportation reauthorization is now under continuing resolutions and does not appear to be headed for reauthorization anytime soon. The seventh continuing resolution of SAFETEA-LU runs until September 30th, 2011 - the end of the federal fiscal year. There is some discussion on the hill about switching to a 2-year bill when reauthorization talks resume, rather than the traditional 6 years.

I-73-74 Economic Atlas Update The I-73-74 Atlas has been updated with 2010 Census information and completed road sections. If you would like, the PTRPO can send you a hard copy or you can view or print it from the RPO website under Projects.

2040 State Transportation Plan Update. The NCDOT is updating the Statewide Transportation Plan, a long range plan focused on programmatic and policy updates. There are three general areas of goals: 1) Modal Effectiveness; 2) Financial Feasibility and 3) Program Delivery and Vision. For more information or to submit comments visit the NCDOT Transportation Reform web page:

www.ncdot.gov/performance/reform/

TIP 2018-2022 Schedule. The local county priorities worked out in the Spring of 2011 for the 2018-2022 Five Year Work Plan will be submitted to the State Prioritization (SPOT) database beginning in July. It will take several months to update the highway, bicycle, pedestrian and transit project priorities and associated information.

Roundabout Article Correction. In the last issue of RPO Update, the information provided about the roundabout installation in Randleman was incorrect. Division 8 Design Construction Unit designed the project, with contract administration by the Asheboro Resident Engineer’s Office. The contractor is APAC-Atlantic, Inc., Thompson-Arthur Division. Our most sincere apologies for the error.
Transportation Advisory Committee Members

Talmadge Baker, Chair City of Asheboro
James Blake, Vice Chair Town of Biscoe
Robert Aswell Town of Wentworth
Alvin Foster Town of Yanceyville
Erik D. Battle Caswell County
Billy Joe Kepley Davidson County
Jackie Morris Montgomery County
Stan Haywood Randolph County
James Kallam Rockingham County

The Piedmont Triad Rural Planning Organization is responsible for:

- Developing long range transportation plans for the region
- Identifying and prioritizing projects for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Providing transportation related data to local governments
- Providing a forum for public involvement in the transportation planning process

PTCOG is becoming the PTRC

On July 1st, the PTCOG will be merging with the Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments (NWPCOG) to become the Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC). The PTRC will serve as the lead planning agency for the RPO. The new organization will provide a range of services to its member governments across a 12 county area including: group facilitation, personnel studies, land use, housing, transportation and environmental planning; workforce development, analysis and interpretation of demographic data through the Regional Data Center and support services for thousands of older adults through the Area Agency on Aging.