



**CENTRAL TEXAS
Regional Mobility Authority**

AGENDA ITEM #18 SUMMARY

Quarterly briefing on the environmental studies for the Bergstrom Expressway, the Oak Hill Parkway, the MoPac South Project, and the 183 North Project.

Strategic Plan Relevance: Regional Mobility

Department: Engineering

Associated Costs: N/A Briefing Only

Funding Source: Toll Equity Grants, Rider 42, STP MM (CAMPO)

Board Action Required: No

Description of Matter: The Director of Engineering will provide a summary of project activities for the following projects:

- Bergstrom Expressway
- Oak Hill Parkway
- MoPac South Project
- 183 North Project

Reference documentation:

GEC Quarterly Activities Reports and Board Presentation

Contact for further information:

Wesley M. Burford, P.E., Director of Engineering



CENTRAL TEXAS
Regional Mobility Authority

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

**Quarterly
Progress
Report**

April 2013

BERGSTROM EXPRESSWAY

OAK HILL PARKWAY

MOPAC SOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

MOPAC INTERSECTIONS ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

US 183 NORTH ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY



CENTRAL TEXAS
Regional Mobility Authority

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Bergstrom Expressway

INTRODUCTION

This report documents and describes the Bergstrom Expressway Project (US 183 South) for the period through April 15, 2013. This Project is currently in the environmental clearance phase of development which requires the completion of an Environmental Assessment consistent with the regulations contained in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The Environmental Document is currently being developed in house by Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Austin District staff and supported by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (Mobility Authority), with the Public Outreach being led by the Mobility Authority. In addition, the Project has been authorized by legislation to use a Comprehensive Development Agreement (CDA) project delivery method. This process promotes innovative financing methods that will allow the Project to be funded and constructed much earlier than traditional methodologies.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project corridor begins just south of the Manor Expressway and extends to SH 71 East; the corridor includes seven grade separations, and connects to 3 major interchanges at the Manor Expressway, Airport Boulevard, and SH 71 East. The corridor includes two pedestrian bridges and a continuous shared use path connecting local communities. The Project can be considered the Gateway to Austin from the Airport and is depicted in the location map below.



The US 183 South Corridor from US 290 East to SH 71 East is one Austin's most significant arteries. Since US 183 was constructed in the mid 1960's, the roadway has been a four lane divided highway with minor improvements. As the primary route to and from the Austin Bergstrom International Airport and points beyond, it attracts numerous motorists per day. In recent years, this vital corridor has grown increasingly congested as the region's population has expanded. The situation is projected to get even worse in the future. Meanwhile, funding challenges at the federal and state level have made it increasingly difficult to finance the corridor.

As part of the NEPA process, the identified needs are to reduce congestion, improve safety and utilize innovative funding and financing processes to expedite project development and construction. Along with the NEPA process, the Mobility Authority is utilizing a Public Involvement and Outreach Program that includes hosting "brown bag" lunch and one-on-one meetings to obtain agency and stakeholder buy-in along the corridor. The Environmental Assessment document is currently being prepared by the TxDOT Austin District. The Mobility Authority, with Atkins under their General Engineering Consultant contract, is supporting and coordinating closely with both TxDOT as the document is being developed.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

The Project Development process is currently focusing on four major elements: Environmental Assessment (EA), Schematic Development, Public Outreach and Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). The Mobility Authority is currently working with TxDOT and other agencies to identify ways to expedite the environmental processes and clearance date.

The first Project Open House was held in September with over 100 attendees. The second Open House, held on March 7, 2013, was another great success with over 70 attendees and an additional 200 online participants. The third Open House and CSS Process is tentatively scheduled for June/July 2013. Following the third Open House, TxDOT will host the Formal Public Hearing (required by NEPA) in late 2013/early 2014 which will show the proposed final design and include the results of the CSS process.

As part of the Project Team, the Mobility Authority is currently supporting TxDOT in the Value Engineering (VE) Study. The VE Study was held on January 28, 2013. The results of the study proposed several design considerations that could result in a noteworthy cost savings to the project. These design considerations are under further evaluation and are anticipated to be incorporated into both the Design Schematic and NEPA Document.

The Mobility Authority is currently supporting TxDOT in the development of the EA:

- Development of exhibits required by NEPA for the document
- Facilitating and Coordinating meeting with other Agencies
- Developing, Updating and Tracking with Primavera Scheduling
- Evaluating impacts and addressing issues relevant to project development
- Supporting in recovery plans in order to meet critical dates

The Mobility Authority is currently updating the Design Schematic:

- Addressing Comments to the 90% Design Schematic
- Evaluating and Addressing Design Issues and Community Inquiries
- Supporting in the Facilitation and Evaluation of the Value Engineering Study and Results
- Facilitating and Coordinating meeting with other Agencies

The Mobility Authority’s Stakeholder and Outreach is comprehensive and currently includes:

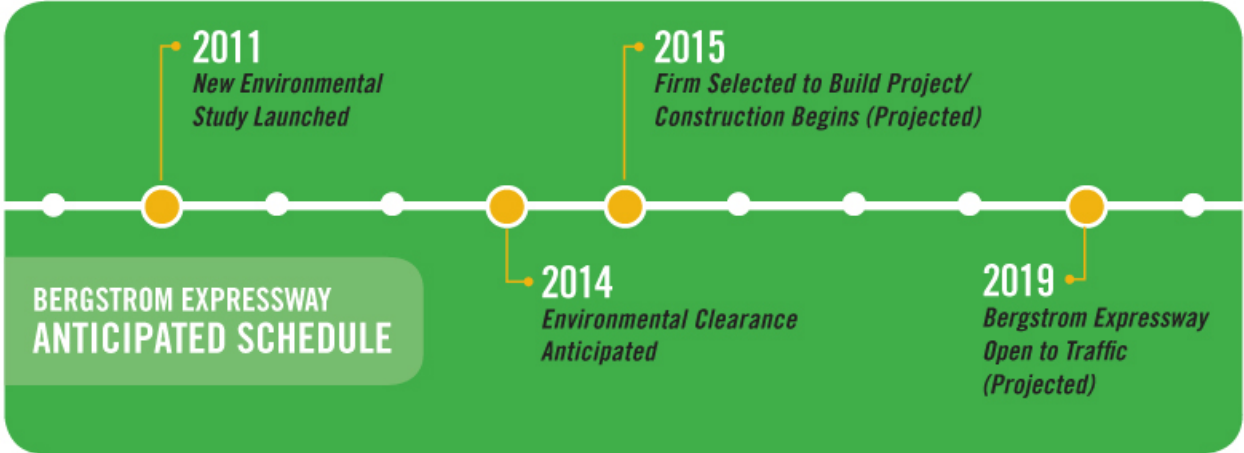
- Agencies: FHWA, TxDOT, City of Austin, Travis County
- Businesses: Misc. Land Developers / Property Owners, Freescale , YMCA, AT&T
- Home Owners Associations: Knollwood , Senate Hills , University Hills
- Interest Groups: Gateway Oaks, Heritage Tree Foundation, PODER, El Concilio

The Mobility Authority’s Context Sensitive Solution process is currently focusing on:

- Integrating the facility with the area’s built environment to enhance community and in particular the area’s economical quality of life
- Integrating the natural environment in order to maximize the facilities scenic, recreation and aesthetic qualities
- Incorporating aesthetics that fit the facilities physical setting and preserve the scenic, aesthetic, neighborhood, historic and environmental attributes of the area
- Including innovative design elements including considerations from the Green Mobility Challenge

SCHEDULE

The Environmental Assessment process was launched in late 2011 and is anticipated to be complete by mid-2014. A detailed schedule discussion, including the tracking of intermediate milestones, will be provided in upcoming Quarterly Reports. Below is a summary of the anticipated timeline that is being communicated to the public.





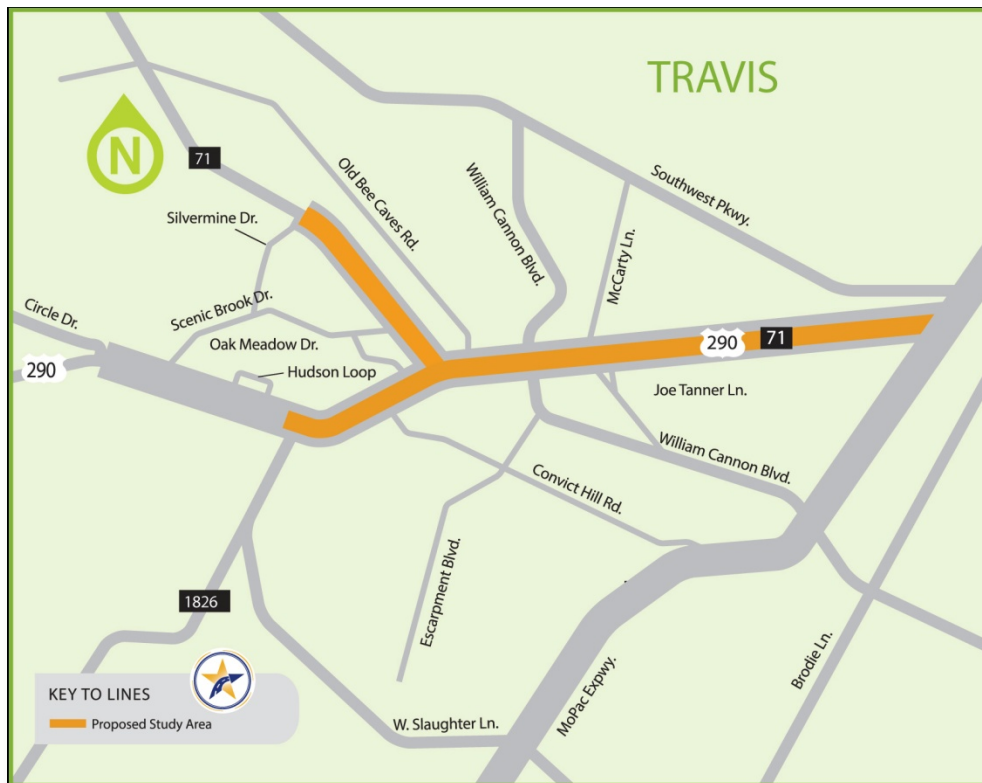
Oak Hill Parkway

INTRODUCTION

This report documents and describes the Oak Hill Parkway Project for the period through April 15, 2013. This Project is currently in the environmental clearance phase of development which requires the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) consistent with the regulations contained in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The Project is currently being developed jointly by the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Austin District.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project encompasses the area surrounding the existing “Y at Oak Hill” intersection and includes the study of US 290 West from FM 1826 to Loop 1, including SH 71 West from Silvermine Drive to US 290 West. The study area is depicted in the location map below.



Currently this area experiences large-scale congestion while attracting more than 60,000 cars/trucks a day and serving as a corridor for statewide travel. As part of the NEPA process, several reasonable alternatives will be identified to address the issues currently plaguing the study area. These alternatives, along with a “No Build” scenario, will be screened to assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts such that environmental values are considered alongside the technical and

economic factors. Another important element of the NEPA process, which is also consistent with the Mobility Authority's approach to project implementation, is public involvement; throughout the entire Environmental Impact Statement process, input will be solicited from neighbors and drivers of the corridor that could potentially be affected.

The Environmental Impact Statement document is currently being prepared by a consultant team led by Rodriguez Transportation Group, Inc. (RTG) under a professional services agreement with the TxDOT Austin District. The Mobility Authority, supported by Atkins under their General Engineering Consultant contract, is coordinating closely with both TxDOT and RTG as the document is being developed.

PREVIOUS EFFORTS

As part of the Public Involvement Initiation, several critical elements were advanced in the previous quarter:

- The Oak Hill Parkway's first open house occurred on November 15th with the goal to gain a better understand the specific issues along the project, directly from the public in attendance. Eighty-three (83) members of the general public signed in for the meeting and through their comments and project surveys we learned valuable insight into the communities concerns as well as the type of project they would like to see. (see photo below)

Citizens completed 48 project surveys and 46 satisfaction surveys via the Open House and Project Website.



- Enhancement Team Kick-off meeting was held on December 3rd to share project information between TxDOT, City of Austin, Travis County and CapMetro and to hear what projects are on their radar. The goal for this group is to cross coordinate other projects in the area (roadway, parks, hike/bike facilities, developer projects) in efforts to create synergy in the Oak Hill community around the project. This team will also be discussing some of the non-transportation related Green Mobility Challenge concepts which are beyond the scope of the Mobility Authority's project.
- An Agency Scoping Meeting was facilitated on January 22nd to include the agencies who expressed an interest in being involved in the project. The main topic of discussion was the project history and the Draft Public and Agency Coordination Plan.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

The implementation of the Project is currently focusing on actively engaging the public to help us identify the project constraints and initiation of early concept development through the use of citizen workgroups. This quarter's activities include:

- An Environmental Workgroup meeting was held January 31 to ensure the study team understood the community concerns and ideas specifically related to water quality, flood plains, trees and vegetation, historical, cultural and other environmental issues.
 - During this workgroup meeting the participants expressed the following project environmental desires (the highlights):
 - preserve the historic oaks along the corridor and replace impacted trees
 - protect and enhance Williamson Creek
 - design aesthetically pleasing and effective water quality protection facilities
 - minimize noise using strategies such as pavements which reduce tire noise
 - protect historic resources such as the Austin Pizza Garden
 - prevent / minimize additional light pollution
 - address greenhouse gas emissions
 - minimize impervious cover

- A subsequent Design Workgroup meeting was held February 19 to hear community ideas and gather ideas for alternative design concepts that meet the purpose and need for the project and best address the concerns and desires gathered at the environmental workgroup meeting.
 - The following thoughts and ideas are a sampling of the ideas / concepts gathered in this workgroup meeting:
 - limit the height of any future roadway improvements and depress portions of US 290, specifically the section starting at the "Y" intersection with SH 71 and moving west possibly building William Cannon over US 290
 - separate through traffic from local traffic / toll through traffic (but not local traffic)
 - maintain a narrow roadway footprint
 - possibly installing High Occupancy Vehicle lanes
 - improve access to businesses and include green space in the design by including hike/bike facilities and environmental improvements
 - consider a boulevard / parkway design without frontage roads or limited frontage roads
 - including transit in long-range planning

- Our latest workgroup meeting was focused on bike/pedestrian facilities and access and was held on March 19th. This meeting provided an opportunity to identify community priorities and to learn about city and neighborhood plans and the Oak Hills Trails plan.
 - Notable events from this workgroup meeting included:
 - A presentation from the Oak Hill Trails Association which highlighted current plans for the "Y" to Barton Creek (YBC) Trail, Williamson Creek Trail, Violet Crown Trail and several other spurs to those trails.
 - Priorities included building the YBC Trail, ensuring safe routes to schools and connecting trails to major destinations (neighborhoods / business centers / retail).
 - Responding to multiple choice questions:

- nearly 83 percent of the workgroup participants said bike and pedestrian improvements should be a part of the Oak Hill Parkway
- 35 percent said the top priority was connecting the Barton Creek multi-use trail to the “Y” intersection
- 60 percent said bike/pedestrian improvements should be paid for through toll revenue from the US 290/SH 71 West improvements when given a list of funding options

Comments from participants also included making safety a priority, separating bicycles/pedestrians from highway traffic, building grade separated highway crossings (over or under), coordinating with the city and neighborhoods regarding connections to the trails and making Oak Hill more pedestrian and cycling friendly.

- On February 18th our first e-newsletter was issued which highlighted the November 15th Open House, the history of the project, the process we are going through and how interested individuals can get involved. Our next Quarterly report is due for release in early April.
- The valuable input from the public has aided the project team in identification of constraints and public desires for the project which has allowed us to initiate the development of concepts. We are in the process of scheduling a preview of the initial concepts with the design workgroup participants that have helped us greatly in this process. This is planned to occur May 16th followed by our second open house which is planned to occur on May 23rd to show the initial concepts to the public at large.
- With the goal to ensure all members of the public have the opportunity to be actively engaged in more detailed elements early in the project development, the project team is working with TTI to launch a Virtual Open House on the same day as the Open House. A link will be provided from our project website that will provide online participants a similar experience to the live open house.
- More detailed notes for all of our workgroups can also be found on the project website www.oakhillparkway.com.

PROGRESS STATUS

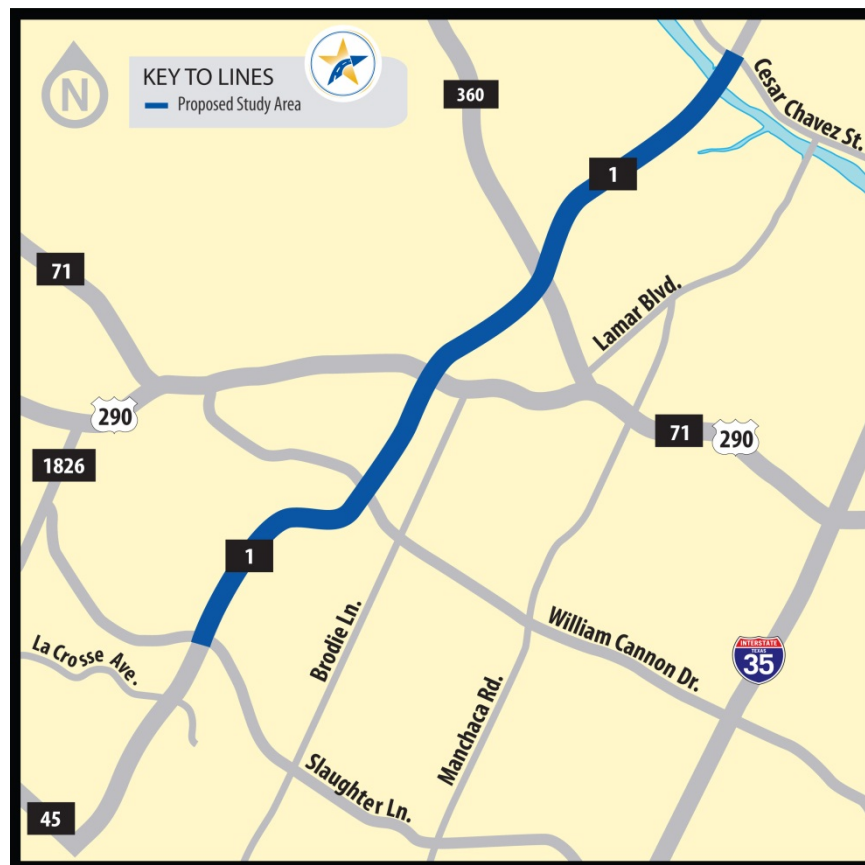
The Environmental Impact Statement process is still in the first six months of development and is anticipated to take approximately 4 years to complete. A detailed schedule discussion, including the tracking of intermediate milestones, will be provided in upcoming Quarterly Reports.

MoPac South Environmental Study

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mobility Authority is initiating activities to start the Environmental Study for improvements to MoPac from Cesar Chavez Street south to Slaughter Lane. Proposed improvements could include adding lane(s) along existing MoPac. Implementation of bicycle/pedestrian facilities and inclusion of park-and-rides will be evaluated as part of the project during the environmental study.

The project has been selected as one of the recipients of the Texas Legislature's Rider 42 funding allocation projects. As a Rider 42 objective, the project will utilize enhanced public engagement strategies and tools. The environmental study and community outreach program are anticipated to start in 2013. This will be the first environmental study led by the Mobility Authority.



This report describes the status of the MoPac South project and documents the activities accomplished through the first quarter of 2013.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

The following activities have been accomplished by the Mobility Authority and its consultants during the reporting period.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT / PROCUREMENT

- In April 2013, the Mobility Authority signed and approved the contract with Jacobs, the approved Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services Consultant for this project.
- The team is currently working with a Traffic & Revenue and Traffic Operational Analysis Consultant on the development of support services scope.
- Development of a public involvement plan with enhanced community outreach measures is underway. The first open house is anticipated to occur in late 2013/early 2014.

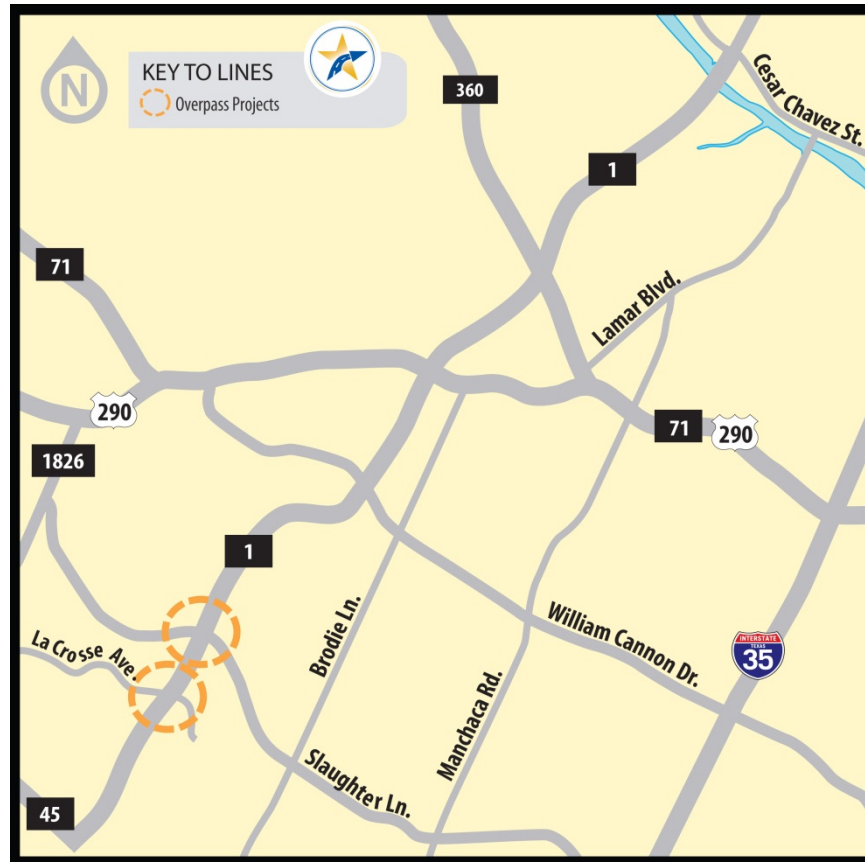
SCHEDULE

The environmental approval process is anticipated to take two to three years. A detailed Project schedule will be prepared as an early action item with Jacobs, and milestones will be provided to the Mobility Authority Board next quarter.

MoPac Intersections Environmental Study

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mobility Authority, in coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), will prepare a Categorical Exclusion (CE) for proposed improvements to the intersections of Slaughter Lane and La Crosse Avenue with MoPac. The environmental study is anticipated to start in 2013. If the proposed improvements are environmentally cleared, the project will be turned over to TxDOT to design, construct, and maintain.



This report describes the status of the MoPac Intersections project and documents the activities accomplished through the first quarter of 2013.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

The following activities have been accomplished by the Mobility Authority and its consultants during the reporting period.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT / PROCUREMENT

- In April 2013, the Mobility Authority signed and approved the contract with Jacobs, the approved Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services Consultant for this project.
- The team is currently working with a Traffic Operational Analysis Consultant on the development of support services scope.

SCHEDULE

The environmental approval process is anticipated to take approximately one year. A detailed Project schedule will be prepared as an early action item with Jacobs, and milestones will be provided to the Mobility Authority Board next quarter.

US 183 North Environmental Study

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mobility Authority will soon initiate activities to start the Environmental Study for improvements to US 183 North from RM 620 to MoPac. Proposed improvements could include adding lane(s) along existing US 183, as well as direct connectors from US 183 and MoPac.

The project was selected as one of the recipients of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) Surface Transportation Program - Metropolitan Mobility (STP MM) funding program. The environmental study and community outreach program are anticipated to start in 2013.



This report describes the status of the US 183 North Project and documents the activities accomplished through the first quarter of 2013.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

The following activities have been accomplished by the Mobility Authority and its consultants during the reporting period.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT / PROCUREMENT

- The procurement process for the 183 North Environmental Study kicked off on January 28 with the issuance of the Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services Request for Qualifications. Seven responses were received, and four teams were short-listed. Interviews were held on March 18. In March, the Mobility Authority Board approved the recommendation of CP&Y as the Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Services Consultant. Contract negotiations are currently underway.
- The team is currently developing support services scope for a Traffic & Revenue and Traffic Operational Analysis Consultant.

SCHEDULE

The environmental approval process is anticipated to take two to three years. The schedule for this project is in development.