CITY COUNCIL REPORT

Public

DATE: February 17, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Community Development Director, Mark Landsiedel; and FMPO Manager, David Wessel

CC: Josh Copley, Jerene Watson, Leadership Team

SUBJECT: Milton Road Studies related to Student Housing

As part of the Student Housing Work Plan effort the Council requested an update on past studies and efforts to improve mobility and traffic congestion on Milton Road. Several such studies exist or are on-going.

Ongoing Studies

Milton Road Alternatives Operations Analysis

Scope: To develop and evaluate a series of corridor improvements for Milton Road from I-17 into the Downtown that incorporate access management, intersection, bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvements. A working assumption is that given the expense of improvements in the Lone Tree Corridor a series of short, mid-term and phased, long-term improvements to Milton will be necessary. **Note:** This study will not identify a preferred alternative.

Project Management and time-frame: FMPO is managing this study. It will be placed on hold for up to 6 months for the transit spine route study to produce ridership projections and transit solutions that can be placed into the microsimulation.

Mobility and Milton Road Congestion relationship: The alternatives are not being subjected to preferred land uses at this time. Their effects are being compared to current and future (20% increase in traffic) conditions. The intent is to allow future studies to select the best multimodal ideas that best support land use and transportation policies for incorporation into a final corridor plan.

Student Housing Relationships: Some of the 20% growth in traffic will be comprised of trips generated by student housing. The various crossing and transit treatments tested can then be matched against more specific student housing assumptions.

Regional Transportation Plan Update

Scope: To produce the mandated update to the Flagstaff MPO regional transportation plan coordinating multimodal and intermodal transportation plans with regional land use, economic and environmental expectations in a fiscally-constrained manner.

Project Management and time-frame: This project is managed by the FMPO in two phases. Kimley Horn & Associates is updating tools and data for the final plan including the regional transportation model, cost model, fiscal model and performance measures. A second phase with significant public involvement and collaboration building will take place starting this summer. Completion of the RTP update is expected by December 2015.

Mobility and Milton Road Congestion relationship: This study will forward recommendations for mobility across modes and assist with the understanding of interrelationships between projects – such as the influence of the Lone Tree Corridor on Milton Road congestion.

Student Housing Relationships: A broad relationship to the *Future Growth Illustration* in the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 will incorporate assumptions about student housing

Forthcoming Studies

Transit Spine Route Study

Scope: To develop, evaluate and select a preferred alternative for high capacity transit services from the Flagstaff Pulliam Airport to the Flagstaff Mall via Milton Road.

Project Management and time-frame: NAIPTA will manage this project. City Council will make the award to Nelson-Nygaard on February 17, 2015. The project will last approximately 12 months.

Mobility and Milton Road Congestion relationship: Transit is a key part of regional mobility, particularly for the transit dependent including young, elderly, disabled and low-income. As the region grows, new highway capacity may be financially or politically infeasible. High capacity transit with bus-rapid transit features may prove to a long-term solution.

Student Housing relationship: NAU and high school students continue to be a large part of the transit market. Their present demand is focused largely on access to and from school. High frequency services like this one being studied can offer them improved access to jobs and other services.

Milton Road Corridor Study

Scope: To work with the public and corridor residents, property owners and businesses to produce a specific plan for the corridor that coordinates land use, transportation and other policies.

Project Management and time-frame: The City of Flagstaff Comprehensive Planning Manager will manage this study. An ADOT Planning Assistance for Rural Areas (PARA) grant application is due in April.

Mobility and Milton Road Congestion relationship: The Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 identifies preferred, but general, land use area types for the corridor. A

specific plan will assist in refining those so that transportation solutions can be tailored to their needs.
Student Housing relationship: The study can identify potential areas for new student housing and be sure that multimodal transportation solutions for new and existing housing will be in place.

Former Studies

Flagstaff Urban Mobility Study
Scope: To identify issues and present solutions for mobility and congestion in the Milton Road corridor.
Project Management and time-frame: ADOT managed this project. It was completed in 2004. Many of the transit solutions and some of the off-corridor pedestrian and bicycle solutions have been implemented. More specific solutions related to access management and new intersection geometries were not implemented for several reasons. **Funding:** shortly after completion of the study the recession hit affecting statewide priorities. **Costs and regional priorities:** At the time the Lone Tree Traffic Interchange seemed of reasonable cost ($30,000,000 +/-) and was a priority for the region. Only later when the I-40 Design Concept Report changed the design and the cost increased to $80,000,000 +/- did the focus change back to Milton Road. **Land Use Uncertainty:** At one time the FMPO had $2,000,000 programmed for design on Milton Road. An urban versus suburban land use quandary prevented clear access management design and a pending forthcoming federal policy requiring certainty of construction funding before design lead to a decision to cancel the design effort. Finally, this study was never adopted as city policy.