

## Chapter 1 | Introduction & Planning Process

Holly Springs has served as a residential and commercial center dating back to colonial times. Despite setbacks throughout the years such as Civil War skirmishes and bank failures during the Depression, the people of Holly Springs have continued to move their community forward. Incorporated in 1877, the Town of Holly Springs has developed into an integral part of southwestern Wake County. The area has seen unprecedented growth in recent years. Because of its growth, elected officials, local staff, and citizen advocates recognized the need for a formalized transportation planning process to help identify the biggest needs and priorities to serve the existing and future needs of Holly Springs.

As with other areas in the region and state, a balanced multimodal transportation network is critical for sustaining the success Holly Springs has enjoyed. Community leaders face tough choices as they develop strategies to overcome these challenges. Conventional wisdom in transportation planning has focused improvements on the highway network and major roads. However, we now recognize such improvements are most effective when balanced with improvements to the bicycle, pedestrian, transit, rail, and freight network. This fosters better access and mobility for residents and visitors, and enhances the way of life in the Holly Springs area.

The *Holly Springs Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)* addresses expected growth in the Holly Springs area as well as the unincorporated areas in Wake County contained within the Town's planning boundary. The plan proposes a multimodal transportation network that fosters growth while preserving the environmental, cultural, and social character of the area. This document considers new planning factors established in the most recent federal transportation authorization legislation. The *CTP* also looks beyond the extents of the existing transportation network to determine the effects of growth on the built environment, with the goal of developing strategies that strive to balance the land use and transportation equation.

This chapter describes the comprehensive transportation planning process, presents the public outreach results, and defines the vision and goals of the *CTP*.



## Planning Process

Transportation planning at its best is a collaborative process led by local staff and citizens invested in their community, and engaging both key stakeholders and the general public. The planning process should be rooted in a public involvement platform that gathers, processes, and applies a diversity of opinions from residents, the business community, and civic groups. Public outreach for the *CTP* occurred through a variety of small- and large-group meetings and an assortment of media. Two principles of public outreach were adhered to:

1. Citizens have a personal understanding of the transportation network and planning decisions have a direct impact on their daily lives.
2. Groups can share in the collective vision for a project even as they hold differing opinions on how this vision should be fulfilled.

With respect to these two principles, the planning process for the *CTP* was designed to create an open dialogue about the needs of current and future residents, visitors, and business owners.

## Public Outreach

Most successful planning projects begin with an inclusive process of strong citizen involvement. For the *CTP*, the underlying principle for understanding local dynamics was collaborative planning and consensus building. Throughout the planning process, local staff and the project team worked hand-in-hand with the public. Along the way, several overarching issues emerged:

- *We need to make Holly Springs more pedestrian and cyclist friendly.*
- *We need to widen streets in order to accommodate increased traffic.*
- *We need better access from one side of town to the other.*
- *We need to be strategic in planning for development along the NC 55 bypass.*
- *We need to take a broader view and look at how the transportation network ties into neighboring communities such as Apex, Cary, and Fuquay-Varina.*

These issues as well as others surfaced during the various channels of public outreach detailed on the following pages.

## Transportation Plan Advisory Committee

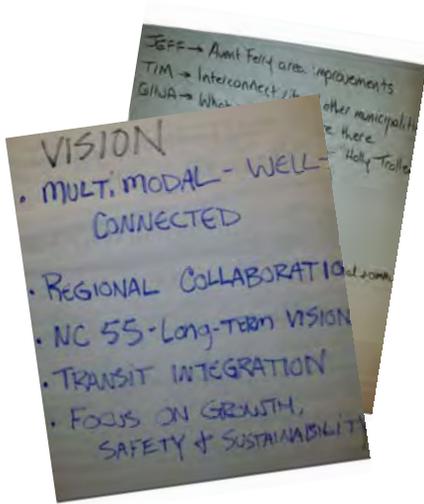
At the outset of the project, a group of community representatives was selected to act as a sounding board throughout the planning process. The Transportation Plan Advisory Committee (TPAC) formed as a dedicated



group of local officials, staff, stakeholders, and citizens to ensure the plan recognized previous planning efforts and incorporated the assorted perspectives found throughout the planning area. The TPAC was instrumental in formulating the vision and goals for the plan and ensuring the final product respected the vision and goals. The TPAC accepted the following mission:

*The Transportation Plan Advisory Committee (TPAC) will provide guidance to the Project Team in the development of a multimodal transportation plan that adheres to good planning practices and encourages sustainable development by integrating transportation and land use decisions. The Plan — built upon a collaborative process between local, regional, and state agencies — will effectively engage the community to create a comprehensive planning tool that directs future transportation decisions in the Holly Springs area.*

Beginning with a kick-off meeting on September 7, 2010, the TPAC met periodically during the plan development phase to fulfill its mission and assist the project team. The TPAC discussed existing deficiencies and potential solutions for biking, driving, using transit, walking, and truck traffic. In addition to serving as a sounding board for project team ideas, the committee participated in visioning and mapping exercises, provided feedback to the project team, and spearheaded the promotion of other public involvement efforts.



The first meeting of the TPAC served as a kick-off meeting, at which the committee members were introduced and a discussion of the project background was held. This discussion was followed by a review of the vision, goals, and objectives of the plan. The meeting ended with a mapping exercise that used existing conditions mapping for issues identification. The committee noted the need to coordinate the CTP with other planning efforts specific to the different elements of the plan (bicycle and pedestrian, transit, freight, land use).

During the meetings that followed the initial kick-off meeting, the TPAC continued to explore these issues as well as potential challenges specific to the modal elements of the CTP. The short feedback loops provided through these regularly scheduled meetings ensured the project team never veered too far from the direction preferred by the TPAC.

### Stakeholder Interviews

At the outset of the planning process, the project team, in consultation with local staff, identified a list of stakeholders. Key stakeholders were selected for more specialized attention to specific matters affecting the *Comprehensive Transportation Plan*. These stakeholders included representatives from the Town of Apex, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, the North Carolina Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), the town of Fuquay-Varina, the Town of Cary, the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ), the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the



North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Progress Energy, and Triangle Transit.

Conversations with these stakeholders provided insight into a variety of issues spanning the social, political, economic, and transportation spectrums. Feedback gathered through these conversations helped validate background information collected through discussions with the TPAC and the results of other public outreach efforts. The information also helped the project team prepare a list of initial recommendations. Some of the comments included:

- Provide connections to key destinations.
- Position Holly Springs for funding opportunities.
- Be progressive in transportation solutions.
- Preserve the NC 55 Bypass.
- Look at small projects with big impacts.
- Reconnect communities.



## Public Workshops

Citizens interact with the transportation system in a variety of ways. Given these unique experiences, they understand the strengths and weaknesses of the transportation system and feel the impact of transportation decisions on a daily basis. A well-publicized and properly designed outreach effort allows local planners and the project team to tap into this special knowledge. The *CTP* included the following two workshops, each of which had specific objectives.

### Workshop # 1 – Visioning

The first public workshop, held September 28, 2010 at the Holly Springs Cultural Center, was interactive and intended to develop project goals, identify issues and concerns, and generate ideas and potential solutions. The evening began with an overview presentation during which the project team outlined the planning process, discussed background information, and laid the groundwork for the interactive sessions that formed the core of the workshop. Following the presentation, those in attendance expressed concerns and needs in a large group setting. Comments from this part of the evening were written on large easel boards. Attendees then gathered in small groups around maps to discuss the opportunities and needs of the area. The comments spanned all the elements of the transportation plan as well as issues related to existing and future land use. Scenes from the first public workshop are shown to the left.





Comments received during the first round of workshops were used throughout the planning process while evaluating existing conditions and developing potential recommendations for facilities, programs, and policies. Prior to finalizing the plan, the project team hosted another public workshop as described on the following page.

### Workshop #2 – Feedback



The second public workshop was held May 9, 2011 at the Holly Springs Cultural Center. This workshop was intended to introduce the general public to the multimodal transportation network recommendations established through the CTP process. A series of maps were displayed illustrating the roadway recommendations, sidewalk and greenway recommendations, and transit recommendations. In addition, the draft recommendations developed as a part of the *Holly Springs Comprehensive Bicycle Plan* were displayed to give the public the opportunity to view the full multimodal system.



Members of the Consultant team and Town staff, along with representatives from the TPAC, were on hand to answer questions and provide background on the development of the recommendations. The public was then invited to comment on the proposed recommendations. Feedback obtained from this public workshop was then considered and incorporated into the finalization of the recommendations for the CTP.



Comments received from the public and the TPAC covered a range of topics, from intersection improvements to multimodal integration. In addition, members of the public provided insight into the priorities that would have the biggest impact on the transportation network for the Holly Springs area. Some of the priorities expressed by the public included:

- There is a need to plan in advance for the Triangle Expressway interchanges.
- Consider roundabouts at problem intersections.
- Widening Holly Springs Road is an urgent priority.
- Protect and enhance our parks through connected bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Implement the recommendations included in the NC 55 Bypass Preferred Access Plan

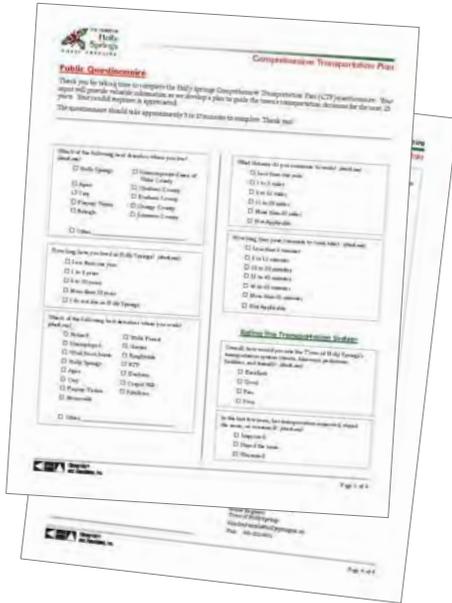




## Public Questionnaire

A questionnaire distributed to TPAC members and the general public provided the project team with valuable information on a variety of transportation and land use topics and helped gauge the community's perception of the area's transportation network. The questionnaire included general questions as well as questions specific to individual elements of the CTP. Other questions challenged respondents to choose among transportation priorities and funding opportunities. While the questionnaire was not intended to be a scientifically valid survey, the receipt of over 200 responses proved helpful in assessing the transportation system and compiling multimodal recommendations.

Looking beyond the CTP, input should be solicited on a biannual basis to keep Town staff informed on the public's transportation viewpoints.



## Demographic Trends

Demographic questions are helpful to gain insight into the characteristics of questionnaire respondents and workshop attendees. These questions revealed the following about respondents:

- 92% live in Holly Springs
- 43% have lived in the region for 1 to 5 years
- 45% work in Cary, Raleigh, or RTP; 14% work in Holly Springs
- 25% commute 11 to 20 miles to work; 28% commute more than 20 miles to work
- 77% have one or two registered vehicles in their household; 23% have three or more registered vehicles in their household

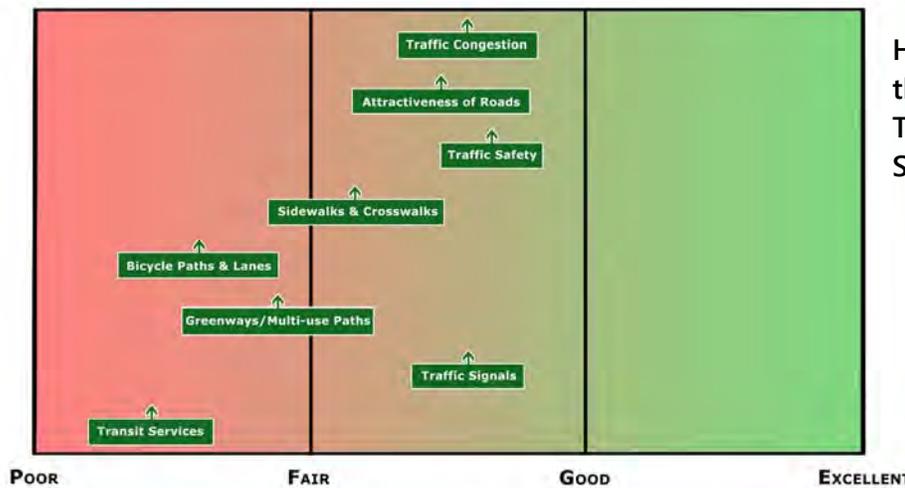
## General Trends

The questionnaire validated the trends that emerged through other public outreach channels. According to the questionnaire, almost half of the respondents (46 %) feel the transportation system in the study area is fair. While almost 37% of respondents rated the transportation system in the study area as good, only 4% of respondents rated it as excellent. When asked if transportation has gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse in the last few years, slightly more than 42% of the questionnaires indicated things have stayed the same. Just over 30% of those participating indicated things have worsened. These responses indicate that improvements could be made to the system to enhance the experience of its users. In addition to these quantitative questions, the questionnaire also asked the public to list three roads in the Holly Springs



area in need of improvements. The top three choices included Holly Springs Road, Avent Ferry Road, and Sunset Lake Road.

The following graphs illustrate some of the trends as expressed through the public questionnaire. Additional results specific to individual elements are detailed in the appropriate chapters of this report.



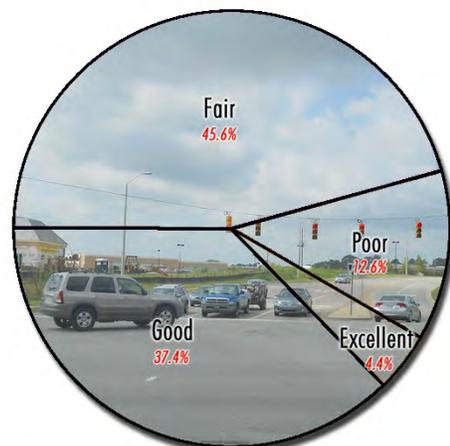
How do you rate the following in the Town of Holly Springs?



In the last few years, has transportation improved, stayed the same, or worsened?



Overall, how would you rate the Town of Holly Springs's transportation system?

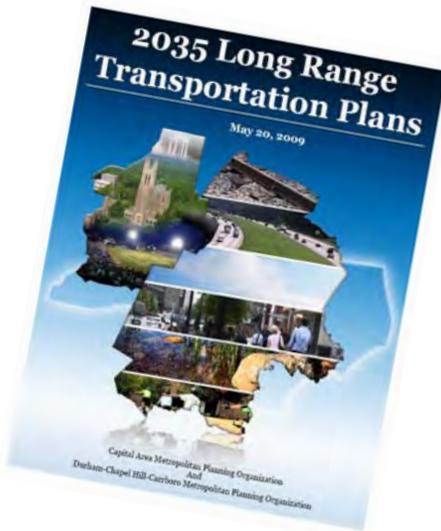




## Previous and Ongoing Planning Efforts

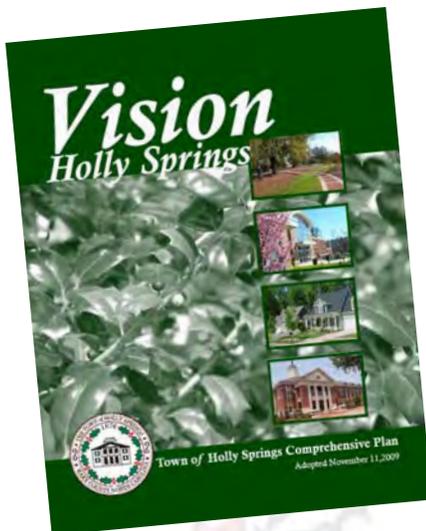
To maximize its effectiveness, the *Holly Springs CTP* should be coordinated with other state, regional, county, and local plans and/or policies that impact planning efforts within the area. This section summarizes a general review of transportation plans prepared within the region, as well as some ongoing planning initiatives. Although this list does not constitute all of the previous or ongoing planning efforts, it does review a few of the key documents that have informed the development of the *CTP*. Additional plans specific to individual elements are detailed in the appropriate chapters of this report.

### 2035 Long Range Transportation Plans – CAMPO and DCHC MPO



The *2035 Long Range Transportation Plans* were adopted by the NC Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) on May 20, 2009. This plan was developed and adopted through the efforts of the study team that included representatives from the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Durham, Orange, and Wake Counties, and local municipalities. The study team projected future year level of service on network roads and developed a list of congestion management strategies aimed to alleviate areas congestion. Other features include sections dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian, transit, freight, and air quality. The plan includes a section detailing the financial plan which includes expected revenue vs. costs. The LRTP is updated every four years, meaning the next LRTP should be approved in 2013.

### Town of Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan



*Vision Holly Springs* was adopted on November 11, 2009. Since then, the Town Council has approved revisions to ensure the plan promotes development envisioned for Holly Springs. *Vision Holly Springs*, the Town's Comprehensive Plan, serves as a policy guide on future land use; transportation; parks, recreation and open space; community character; business development; community facilities; infrastructure and utilities; and natural resources. The Comprehensive Plan is the primary tool that the Town staff, Planning Board and Town Council use in deciding priorities for public investment. Appendix A-2 of the Comprehensive Plan includes area and gateway plans for the Village District Area, the Northeast Gateway, and the Southern Gateway. These plans were reviewed in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan.

### Wake County Transportation Plan

The *Wake County Transportation Plan* was adopted in April 2003. This plan was created to be coordinated with the County's land use plan. It evaluated the thoroughfare system, including average daily traffic,



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capacity for traffic, level of service for those using the system, current function of the system, cross sections, safety, and design standards. In addition, the plan addressed non-thoroughfare elements such as collector/local streets, bikeways, sidewalk policies, transit alternatives, and open space issues. This effort included extensive land use development and evaluation using the Triangle regional TRANPLAN model

### Southwest Area Study



The NC Capital Area MPO decided to initiate a study of the southwestern portion of the metropolitan area. This study, initiated in early 2011, includes all of Holly Springs, Fuquay-Varina, and Angier, as well as parts of Wake County, Harnett County, and Apex. Since this study is still in its infancy, recommendations from the CTP can be considered during the formulation of recommendations. This planning effort is expected to conclude in June 2012.

### Vision and Goals

The vision for the CTP was developed in collaboration with the Transportation Plan Advisory Committee and validated through public outreach. The vision, which is intended to guide the planning process, is as follows:

**We envision a growing community serviced by a safe and sustainable transportation system that provides real choice among modes of travel. Our transportation system contributes to an enhanced quality of life by providing attractive connections between destinations for motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users without compromising cultural and environmental resources, and it supports the efficient movement of people and goods at both the local and regional scale.**

Although the CTP is not held to the same standards as a federally mandated long-range transportation plan, a similar methodology was used in developing the plan. One example is the inclusion of the eight SAFETEA-LU planning factors. These factors represent one way federal officials assess how a transportation plan addresses the unique needs of today's complex transportation systems. Although there is no connection between federal legislation and the CTP, they directly influence the direction of the larger region's long range transportation plan. To make the CTP as consistent as possible with the guidance shaping that document, the plan's goals are grouped according to the eight planning factors. It should be noted that some goals address more than one planning factor.



**Support the economic vitality of the area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.**

- Improve access to downtown Holly Springs and key activity centers for people and freight.

**Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.**

- Provide a safe traveling experience for all users by implementing safety measures at high priority crash locations and improving facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.

**Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.**

- Implement a flexible transportation system that aids the response to and recovery from natural and manmade disasters.

**Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.**

- Develop a comprehensive set of typical cross sections that illustrate effective congestion management and context-sensitive solutions that balance local accessibility with regional mobility.

**Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.**

- Integrate land use and transportation policies to limit impacts to sensitive land, focus development in prime locations, encourage trips by modes other than personal automobiles, and enhance the region's quality of life.
- Minimize direct and indirect environmental impacts of the transportation system by first considering improvements to the existing system before selecting strategic locations for newly constructed facilities.
- Support mixed-use development to encourage biking and walking, in turn improving the Holly Springs area's environment and the health of its citizens.





**Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.**

- Connect homes, parks, community activity centers, employment hubs, and other key destinations to one another through a coordinated network of bicycle facilities and off-road trails.
- Promote a pedestrian-friendly environment by filling gaps and improving connectivity throughout the sidewalk system and to key destination or activity nodes.
- Create a system of interconnected streets to improve mobility and distribute traffic efficiently and appropriately by purpose and function.

**Promote efficient system management and operation.**

- Encourage streetscape and traffic calming features in roadway designs for collector and residential streets.
- Outline how local policy can encourage a network of Complete Streets that operate efficiently as conduits of travel and elements of public space.
- Identify opportunities to integrate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) as part of an overall transportation management strategy.

**Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.**

- Develop a plan that maximizes benefits to the transportation system while minimizing costs.
- Recognize that the area’s most important transportation corridors must balance the needs of adjacent property owners dependent upon access to the roadway with the needs motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.





## Holly Springs CTP

The recommendations that form the essence of this plan represent the collective vision for a safe, multimodal, and interconnected transportation system that supports continued economic development without compromising the natural, historic, and social resources vital to the area’s sustainability. The elements that follow, beginning with existing conditions and concluding with an implementation plan, adhere to this vision.

### **Chapter 2 – Social and Environmental Resources**

This chapter sets the stage for the transportation network recommendations by detailing the current social, economic, and environmental conditions in the study area. Current and projected land use needs established by previous planning efforts are also discussed.

### **Chapter 3 – Roadway Element**

This chapter addresses the existing roadway conditions in the study area and produces a set of recommendations. Roadway recommendations are considered from the intersection to the corridor level, and include collector street levels and higher. Congestion management, safety, and regional connectivity are all addressed in this section.

### **Chapter 4 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Element**

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Element addresses the recent bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway planning efforts that have been undertaken by the Town of Holly Springs. Existing facility types and proposed recommendations are introduced.

### **Chapter 5 – Transit Element**

This chapter discusses the different types and intensities of transit service options to the Triangle region. Transit recommendations are discussed that seek to address current demands and build a base for higher-level transit service in the future.

### **Chapter 6 – Funding and Implementation**

This chapter references the recommendations established for each of the modal elements and develops a prioritized process for evaluating these projects. Cost estimates are provided for major projects, and potential funding opportunities are discussed.

