

Division 5 and Division 8 One-on-One Meeting FY 2011-2020 Transportation Improvement Program

Agenda

- 1. 2011-2020 TIP Items for Discussion**
 - a. General Funding and Design Issues**
 - b. Major Project Schedules and Funding**
 - c. Project Study and Project Management Requests**
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1.2011-2020 TIP Items for Discussion

The DCHC MPO has reviewed the 2011-2020 Draft STIP and developed the following list of issues for discussion. The MPO is developing the 2011-2020 MTIP which will be approved in late spring 2011. Traffic counts and volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratios that are identified on this documents can be found on a companion document titled “Historic and Projected Traffic Counts and Volume-to-Capacity Ratio.”

a.General Funding and Design Issues

1. SPOT and Loop Evaluation Processes

The DCHC MPO commends the NCDOT for developing the SPOT and Loop evaluation processes that incorporate a more objective and open methodology for equity formula and loop highway projects. The MPO appreciates NCDOT’s solicitation of input to the development of those evaluation methodologies and the willingness of the NCDOT to address many of the MPO’s concerns and incorporate its suggestions.

2. Project selection

The MPO wants to make project selection, a power granted to the MPO through federal transportation legislation. This power is usurped in several ways but most notably when the NCDOT does not provide the STIP budget to the MPO and does not permit the MPO to move funding from deleted, scaled back and under budget projects to other projects designated by the MPO. As an example in Division 5, the East End Connector (U-0071) was to use \$33 million in Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding in the FY 2009-2015 STIP but will be completely funded by loop funding in the draft STIP. However, the MPO is not given the opportunity to reapportion this funding to projects that are MPO priorities.

3. Need additional funding for transportation

The MPO commends the NCDOT for their part in getting the Mobility Fund enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly. As the NCDOT develops the

evaluation process and criteria for this fund, the MPO encourages the NCDOT to prioritize large projects in urban areas.

DCHC MPO has only one new highway project (i.e., Hopson Road project, which has only moderate regional impact) and three relatively minor bicycle, pedestrian and transit related projects in Division 5 funded in the draft FY 2011-2020 STIP that are new. These are few projects given continued growth in population and employment in this region, the fact that the draft FY 2011-2020 STIP assumes five additional planning years (from 2015 through 2020), and the East End Connector will no longer use \$33 million in STP funding. Where has the funding gone? The project cost increases would only consume a small portion of these funds.

4. Funding for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects

The DCHC MPO strongly supports multi-modal transportation. Many of the MPO's top priorities are bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects (see Regional Priority List). Unfortunately, the traditional funding sources for these projects have been disproportionately targeted for rescissions in the past and the SPOT process, which the MPO believes to be a substantial improvement over the previous prioritization process, does not allocate sufficient funding to bicycle, pedestrian and transit projects.

In addition, the policy for sharing projects costs is skewed against bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Local governments are not required to share in the cost of highway facilities but must share a large portion, 30% to 50%, of the cost of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The DCHC MPO wants bicycle, pedestrian and transit projects to receive more funding, even if the funding increase must come from funds traditionally used for highway projects (such as STP), and to remove the bias against bicycle and pedestrian projects in the cost sharing policy.

5. 2010 Funding Rescission

Recently, the MPO found that the method the NCDOT developed to rescind funds in North Carolina will take the bulk of the rescission funding from programs that the DCHC MPO believes are important. The CMAQ and STP-Enhancement programs provide the majority of the \$61.5 million rescission in North Carolina. The MPO programs most of the CMAQ funding, and uses the STP-Enhancement program to fund many of the area's non-highway projects. The rescission should take an equal proportion across all programs and not target non-highway programs.

6. Complete Streets/Project Descriptions

NCDOT has changed its approach to highway design from accommodating motor vehicles only to providing for a multi-modal transportation system. The Complete Streets program has initiated much of this needed change. However, on

roadway projects that include widening and multi-modal facilities, the STIP persists in describing projects with “widen to multi-lanes” with no mention of multi-modal facilities. The DCHC MPO continues to believe that the TIP would better communicate to the public and to NCDOT departments the actual project scope if the project descriptions said “widen to multi-lanes and include bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities” where appropriate.

b. Major Project Schedules and Funding

7. U-0071 (East End Connector)

The DCHC MPO strongly supports the change in funding for the East End Connector. In the FY2009-2015 STIP, part of this project (i.e., \$33.5 million) was funded using STP funds, which drew down from the region’s available equity formula funds. In the draft STIP, Highway Trust Funds appropriately fund the entire project.

The DCHC MPO requests that construction for this project not be delayed any further. The first year for construction was delayed from 2013 to 2014 between the FY2009-2015 STIP and draft FY2011-2020 STIP, which follows a two year delay between the previous set of STIPs. This project is Durham’s highest priority and would greatly improve safety, congestion, and access through Durham.

8. FS-1005C (NC 54, from I-40 to NC 55) and C-4402 (NC 54 Bicycle Improvements)

The schedule for this project, which includes additional lanes and accommodations for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit, should be accelerated. It placed #1 among statewide subregional highway projects in the NCDOT Strategic prioritization process. The draft STIP only designates a feasibility study, and does not even include planning or environmental work for the project, let alone construction funding, over the next ten years. The MPO wants to accelerate the schedule for this project and use STP funding that was previously designated for the East End Connector (U-0071) for constructing this project.

For this section of NC 54, the V/C already exceeds a level-of-service (LOS) E and projected volumes will be up to 35% over the LOS E. The projected V/C for a parallel route, I-40 between NC 54 and NC 55, are almost as high as that for NC 54.

The MPO believes that the NC 54 bicycle improvements (C-4402) project should be integrated with the feasibility study and planning of the NC 54 capacity improvements. The estimated cost of widening NC 54 is \$91 million.

9. New Project (Fayetteville Road, from Woodcroft Parkway to Riddle Rd.)

This project is at the top of the MPO's regional priority list and placed #2 among Division 5 subregional highway projects in the NCDOT Strategic prioritization

process. It is a critical element for reducing congestion in the north/south corridor of south-central Durham. The City of Durham has already completed some preliminary design and environmental work on this alignment, and plans to construct a realignment of the Fayetteville Rd./Riddle Rd./Buxton Rd. intersection. Thus, the widening of Fayetteville Rd. will help leverage the benefits of the City's investment in this corridor and the project might be ready for construction in a relatively short time frame. The MPO wants to use STP funding that was previously designated for the East End Connector (U-0071) to construct this project. The estimated cost of the Fayetteville Road widening is \$21 million.

This section of Fayetteville Road is mostly at an LOS E, and projections (for the year 2035) show volumes that will exceed LOS E by up to 27%.

10. New Project (Erwin Road, from US 15-501 to NC 751)

This project, which is #3 in the MPO's regional priority list and placed #3 among Division 5 subregional highway projects in the NCDOT Strategic prioritization process, includes bicycle, pedestrian and safety improvements. It is a critical transportation link between Durham and Chapel Hill and as a consequence the levels of vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic along segments of this route are increasing. The MPO wants to work with the NCDOT to complete a feasibility analysis of this project and identify construction funding. The estimated cost for this project is \$5.5 million.

11. U-3308 (NC 55/Alston Avenue, NC 147 to Holloway St.)

The construction of this project has been delayed three years in the draft STIP to the year 2014. The DCHC MPO appreciates the willingness of the NCDOT to continue working with local officials to find design and economic justice solutions for this project. The City of Durham still supports this project, and therefore wants the construction to begin as soon as possible after a community consensus is reached.

12. U-2405 (M. L. King Jr. Parkway and NC 55 Interchange)

With the completion of M. L. King Jr. Parkway from US 15-501 to NC 55, it is appropriate to complete the last link of this important thoroughfare from NC 55 to Cornwallis Road to serve the Research Triangle Park. The MPO wants to move forward by funding Alternative 2 from the 2008 feasibility study that considered two alternatives for this intersection. That alternative proposed a modified at-grade intersection with a cost of \$29,850,000.

13. FS-1008B (NC 751, Feasibility Study for adding lanes) [Div. 5 and Div. 8]

This feasibility study proposes to add lanes between US 64 in Chatham County and north of Fayetteville Road in Durham County. The MPO wants assurances that the feasibility study will evaluate a broad range of solutions some of which might be lower cost safety and capacity improvements such as turn lanes and intersection improvements.

Projected traffic volumes (year 2035) will produce an LOS E, and the section of NC 751 between O’Kelly Chapel Rd. and Fayetteville Rd. has projected volumes exceeding LOS E by 49%. On a parallel route, NC 55 between I-40 and US 64, projected volumes will exceed LOS E by up to 94%.

14. Chatham County highway projects [Div. 8]

There are four Chatham County highway projects in the DCHC MPO Regional Priority List that are not in the draft STIP. These projects rank high on the SPOT statewide project lists and should be addressed in the STIP.

- a. Jack Bennett Road [SR1717] (US 15-501 to Lystra Rd [SR1721]), safety improvements. This project is #4 on the priority list and #2 on the statewide SPOT ranking for Subregional Safety. The cost estimate for this project is \$6.9 million.
- b. Lystra Road [SR1721] (US 15-501 to Farrington Point Rd [SR1008]), safety improvements. This project is #7 on the priority list and #12 on the statewide SPOT ranking for Subregional Modernization. The cost estimate for this project is \$9.9 million.
- c. Lystra Road [SR1721] (Jack Bennett Rd [SR1717] to west side of N. Chatham Elementary), increase length of turn lanes. This project is #16 on the priority list and #18 on the statewide SPOT ranking for Subregional Safety. The cost estimate for this project is \$250,000.
- d. Jeremiah Drive [SR1762] (Lystra Rd [SR1721] to End), elevate road for flood control. This project is #17 on the priority list and #17 on the statewide SPOT ranking for Subregional Modernization. The cost estimate for this project is \$100,000.

c. Planning Study and Project Management Requests

15. Loop Projects: U-4720 (US 70), U-4721 (Northern Durham Parkway), U-4722 (US 501/Roxboro Rd.), and I-4743 (I-85)

With the East End Connector (U-71) included in the draft FY 2011-2020 STIP, it is important to initiate the planning process for the next priority Highway Trust Fund projects in Durham. The loop projects to be considered for study include: the US 70 conversion to a freeway; construction of the Northern Durham Parkway; the widening of Roxboro Road from Duke Street to Goodwin Road; and the widening of I-85 from US 70 to Redwood Road. In the statewide ranking of loop projects, the Roxboro Road project was ranked second and the I-85 project ranked higher than one-half of the funded loop projects. Projected volumes for this section of I-85 exceed LOS E by up to 12%. The high ranking of Roxboro Road is at odds with the DCHC MPO’s stated priority, which has Roxboro Road as the last loop project to be constructed. The DCHC MPO and NCDOT need to

discuss and identify the next loop project to be studied and reserve funding to move that study forward.

16. U-4724 (Cornwallis Rd., S. Roxboro Rd. to Chapel Hill Rd.)

This project is currently funded using the MPO's STP-DA funds. Additional funding may be needed depending on a revised cost estimate. The current cost estimate is \$2.3 million.

17. Additional DCHC MPO Priority Projects

There are three additional Division 5 highway projects in the DCHC MPO Regional Priority List that are not addressed in the draft STIP:

- a. NC 54 (from I-40 west to Barbee Chapel Rd.), widen to six lanes divided with sidewalks. This project is #21 on the priority list and a feasibility study should be considered. The cost to widen NC 54 is \$39 million. This section of NC 54 currently exceeds LOS E by up to 20%.
- b. Old Oxford Highway (Roxboro Road to Hamlin Road), expand capacity, bike lanes and sidewalks. This project is #22 on the priority list and placed #10 among Division 5 subregional highway projects in the NCDOT Strategic prioritization process. A feasibility study should be considered. The estimated cost for this project is \$38 million.
- c. NC 751 (S. Roxboro Road to NC 54), widen to four lanes, bike lanes and sidewalks. The City of Durham plans to construct this project but will need substantial cooperation from the NCDOT to avoid delays. The estimated cost of this project is \$7.2 million.