

DCHC MPO -- Goals, Objectives and Targets

Comments

Background

The TAC released the Goals, Objectives and Targets for public comment at their March meeting. Up to this point, the public input process included four public workshops, an online survey and email comments from citizens. In addition, TAC members and local government staff have provided comments. This document provides a compilation of the comments received in time for review at the May TCC meeting. The Chapel Hill Town Council approved a resolution with proposed changes to the Goals, Objectives and Targets. A copy of the three-page resolution begins on page 5 of this document.

Summary and Compilation

This section provides the complete text of all the comments received. A line separates the individual comments. In summary, the comments:

- Ask for more depth in the environmental Goals and Objectives;
- Question how Southwest Durham Drive abides by the environmental, neighborhood and disadvantaged population Objectives;
- Support walkable communities and transportation alternatives; and,
- Request specific transportation facilities.

The Chapel Hill Town Council resolution suggests additional modifications.

Comment #1

1. In general I support the stated goals and objectives. However some of them, like "Protect the Environment" have such broad meaning that they lose any applicable value. They should be more specific like: "No construction or development will occur in areas designated as Significant Natural Heritage Areas"

2. Goal 6c: "Identify and protect environmental sensitive areas early in the process." It appears this did not occur in the earlier versions of the LRTP and was also omitted in the Light Rail study. It is imperative that this is done and an (preliminary) environmental impact identification is made. There will be alternatives identified in the draft proposals and an informed choice of the preferred alternative can only be made if the environmental impact is taken into consideration.

3. Goal 6a: Establish performance standards and report impacts on public health, natural environment, cultural resources and social systems.” No mention was made when and how these standards will be established.
4. I would like to suggest an additional objective: “Bike lanes on arterial roads will be separated from (adjacent to) the road-deck.”
5. Table 2 - Proposed targets for the 2040 LRTP.
 1. “VMT per Capita”. 31 in 2010. Proposed 31 in 2040. 30 would be considered good. This does not appear “good” to me.
 4. “Transit Mode share all trips”. In 2010 2.8%. Projected in 2040 2.6%. A target of 3% considered good.

If that is all we are going to get for spending 1.4 billion dollars on a Rail connection, we have to do some more thinking. My suggestion would be to replace the word “good” with “conservative” and the word “best” with “aggressive”. Leave out the column “better” as it is exactly in the middle and therefore meaningless.

Hank Rodenburg

Comment #2

April 29, 2012

Chapel Hill, N.C.

Dear Andrew Henry:

I just wanted to reiterate and share for the record some of the points made and discussed at the workshop you hosted at the Carrboro Town Hall some weeks back. These community concerns relate specifically to the LRTP Goals and Objectives, namely the following:

- Consistent with community goals and cost effective.
- Conserve natural resources.
- Encourage safe pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular travel.
- Minimize traffic intrusion in residential neighborhoods.
- Establish performance standards and report impacts on public health, natural environment, cultural resources and social systems.
- Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas early in the planning process.
- Ensure that transportation facilities do not negatively affect disadvantaged populations disproportionately.

For starters, these goals and objectives currently have little if any depth or detail, and for them to be actionable and objective-to gain and receive community support, they require a significant degree of fleshing out and stakeholder engagement.

Since C2 for example is the preferred alternative for the LRT, I'm confused how Southwest Durham Drive (SWDD) going thru the Little Creek, a Significant Natural Heritage Area and currently following the same route as C1, would satisfy and be consistent with a "community goal, "conserve natural resources" or "identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas early in the planning process." Moving on, I'm uncertain also how SWDD going down Meadowmont Lane would fulfill the "encourage safe pedestrian...travel" or " minimize traffic intrusion in residential neighborhoods" goals, especially with an elementary school located and a residential area in its proposed path. Another concern is that what was in existence when the plans were proposed or even discussed, is not currently the situation on the ground, and this entire process must be informed by the current scope of reality, namely, the facts as they are today.

How also does SWDD going down Meadowmont Lane, in terms of the Cedar's community, "not negatively affect disadvantaged populations disproportionately"? In fact, it would affect this population disproportionately, and for that reason alone this goal does not appear informed in fact by the reality on the ground as it exists today.

These are just a few examples of how and why the goals and objectives outlined during the workshop- and the process by which they would inform the project require being far more fully informed by community and environmental realities, which, until now, does not appear part of the process.

As with all principles, procedures, goals, targets and objectives for such projects, we the community, hope and trust that the process for which the LRTP follows will be fully informed by and integrally influenced at each step of the process by detailed community and environmentally-based inputs based on today's reality. This is especially the case having gone through the process around the LRT, C1, and the Little Creek and the SNHA, which, to say the least was not fully informed by such worthy goals. What is essential is that the process be informed upstream- and eventually downstream -by well-informed, community and stakeholder-based inputs, like N.C. Department of Natural Resources, the Army Corp of Engineers, just a few examples of those who need to be at the table before such goals and objectives can be said to be more fully-informed and comprehensive.

Many thanks again for your concern and interest in community feedback.

Sincerely,
Geoffrey D. Geist

This section is a compilation of the comments received on the comment forms.

- Need access from East of Hillsborough for bikes and pedestrians- accessible to Orange High School Rd? St. Mary's is too busy, narrow and hilly-i.e., too dangerous. See Holly Reid.
- The way the SE Data is displayed using TAZ's that seem a little awkward/confusing based on the boundaries used. I recommend getting feedback on the known and potential development in Pittsboro from the town's planning staff. They will be able to provide more realistic information on prospects for new residential and commercial employment.
- In my opinion, creating opportunities for residents to live and work within a walkable community ought to be the 1st priority. Secondary to that, providing different options for residents to get to work should be the second most expensive item in a holistic transportation/transit budget. While this is currently needed for those who live in Durham (Triangle) now, providing these two options to the expected 1.3 million coming will be. I feel that in the mix of people moving to the Triangle very soon, a fairly significant percentage will be families from other economically challenged areas for jobs. It makes sense to me that this majority will not be bringing a lot of resources. They may have suffered from an extended period of unemployment, mortgage failures and/or environmental disasters. These circumstances will be the biggest challenge for the MPO to deal with. People with resources will find a way themselves. For the 1st folks, we need to provide planning for housing, municipal infrastructures and a place to work. Providing these close together has to be high on our list of priorities.
- Target and Sam's Club: There are bushes between bus stop and the stores. Sometimes, the driver has to use alternate stops for a female rider in a wheelchair
- Durham Station: Needs button to open bathroom doors for handicap accessibility
- Southpoint → REI Side: Big hole on sidewalk at bus stop
- Megabus needs to stop at regular bus bays
- Can't get from Durham Station to Amtrak Station in a wheelchair

(Editor's note: this set of transit related comments were immediately forwarded to the appropriate transit staff)

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING THE DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DRAFT 2040 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2012-05-30/R-7)

WHEREAS, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization has begun the process for preparing the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the development and adoption of goals and objectives and performance targets will guide the development of the final 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization has released draft 2040 Goals and Objectives and Performance Targets for public comment; and

WHEREAS, the Chapel Hill Town Council and Town Advisory Boards have reviewed the draft 2040 Goals and Objectives and Performance Targets; and

WHEREAS, the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Transportation Advisory Committee is expected to approve the 2040 Goals and Objectives and Performance Targets on June 13, 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill that the Council recommends the Transportation Advisory Committee approve the draft 2040 Goals and Objectives and Performance Targets with the following modifications:

- Include consideration of how to accommodate slower moving vehicles like scooters and electric bicycles
- Include expectation that all transit vehicles can accommodate bicycles
- Provide for ongoing monitoring of bicycle and pedestrian usage.
- The overall Goals and Objectives should be developed to include specific strategies for each of the objectives.
- Goal #2: Pedestrian and Bicycle Systems should emphasize the provision of off road bicycle facilities and bike lanes.
- Goal #5: Integration of Land Use should be expanded to provide more guidance on land use patterns that support transportation choices. This section should also associate transportation funding decisions with appropriate land use plans including implementation of suggested policies for integrating land use and transit.

- Goal #6: Protection of Natural Environment and Social Systems should include an objective to evaluate environmental considerations early in project planning and development phases. This may include a form of limited Environmental Impact Statement that will assist decision makers.
- Goal #7: Public Involvement should include expanded outreach efforts to engage a broader cross section of the community during all phases of Long Range Plan development.
- Goal #9: Freight Transportation and Urban Goods movement should develop policies for freight delivery within urban centers and proposed TOD's to minimize congestion on urban streets.
- Goal 1, Overall Transportation System should include a reference to addressing the impact of changing demographics, particularly an increase in the elderly population.
- Goal 1, Overall Transportation should include expanding accessibility in addition to increased mobility.
- Objectives 3b Public Transportation and 4b Pedestrian and Bicycle should include a reference to compliance with the Americans with Disability Act.
- Goal 4, Pedestrian and Bicycle System, should emphasize community building through improved connectivity.
- Objective 4e, Pedestrian and Bicycle System should also include a reference to retrofitting existing facilities in addition to design of new facilities.
- Goal 5, Integration of Land Use and Transportation should include a definition of effective mixed use design.
- Goal 7d, Public Involvement should be revised to better define how the information will be used. The information should be reflected in the planning process and used to allocate resources.
- Goal 9, Freight Transportation should include expanded use of rail transportation.
- The Performance Targets should provide information at the county and municipal level.

- The Performance Targets should focus on selected transportation corridors to better assess the impact of public transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- Data/numerical targets for VMT, congestion, drive times, etc., should reflect the distribution of impacts rather than just dealing with averages, so that it is possible to understand better the impact of changes.
- Primary and secondary environmental impacts should be included in Section 6, Protection of Natural Environment.
- Protection of neighborhoods should be included in Section 1, Overall Transportation System.
- Section 4, Pedestrian and Bicycle System should include reference to schools and transportation
- Section 5, Integration of Land Use and Transportation should include reference between housing affordability and transit. Section should also include standards for transit oriented development.
- Section 4, Pedestrian and Bicycle System should include bicycle education.
- The Goals and Objectives section should include a discussion of how goals and objectives are balanced during decision making.
- Data for Vehicle Miles Traveled should be broken down by County and jurisdiction.
- More children walking or riding bicycle to school should be identified as a method of reducing peak congestion.
- The Metropolitan Planning Organization should analyze the impact of providing a bonus for development of brownfield sites rather than greenfield locations.

This the 30th day of May, 2012.