

Appendix 8. Public Comments and Plan Revisions

Framework

This appendix includes more detail on public comments received on the Connect2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and how plan revisions are made based on comments and agency review.

Comments and revisions are one of four types:

1. Technical corrections – these are changes that are made to the document to better reflect intended information, correct errors, improve formatting or other clarifying changes that do not affect policies, commitments, networks, land use or fiscal constraint. These types of changes may continue to be made after formal report adoption if errors are found or the formatting of information leads to erroneous interpretations. The date on the front of the plan indicates what version of the report the reader is viewing.
2. Comments resulting in additional commitments – these are comments that resulted in changes to the document that are highlighted because they result in changed policies or commitments since the preparation of the original draft document. The specific changes are noted.
3. Frequent comments – These are comments that were typically received from several commenters, address issues common to both MPOs and would benefit from a clarifying response on behalf of both MPOs.
4. Additional comments – These are typically specific comments received by one of the MPOs on particular issues or projects. In addition to any of these additional comments listed in this appendix, a full set of comments may be viewed at the following MPO web sites:

NC Capital Area MPO: <http://www.campo-nc.us/transportation-plan/draft-2045-metropolitan-transportation-plan>

Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO: <http://www.dchcmpo.org/programs/transport/2045mtp.asp#tabs9>

Technical Corrections. Technical corrections are not specifically listed. If you find an error or omission in this plan and would like to propose a technical correction, please contact John Hodges-Cople at the Triangle J Council of Governments at johnhc@ticog.org.

Comments Resulting in Additional Commitments. The following additional commitments were added to the Plan during the public comment and review period:

- The following FAST Act performance measures were added (Section 4.3; the DCHC MPO extended its public comment period to allow additional time to comment on the addition of these performance measures):
 - Transit Asset Performance Measures
 - Safety Performance Measures
- The MPOs will refine the environmental justice analysis prior to the next federal certification reviews (Section 7.12).

Frequent Comments. The following frequent comments were received; additional information is provided to clarify the issues raised in the comments:

Q. Why are improvements to roads and intersections that are known to have bad traffic flow shown in later horizon years in the Draft MTP when compared to projects on other roads that have little traffic, or fewer traffic problems (i.e. Ten Ten Road, Holly Springs Road, Kildaire Farm Road)?

Funding is the biggest challenge for these roads. The MTP must be fiscally constrained, and where the projects are listed in the horizon categories (decades) is largely based on when they are likely to receive committed funding. Since the roads asked about are all secondary roads, they are only eligible for the Division Needs pot of funding in the N.C. Strategic Prioritization of Transportation Improvements (SPOT) process (roughly \$10 million per year for all secondary roads in 8 counties including Wake & Durham). That basically means they have to be funded locally but since most of these roads are either outside a municipality or on the border of a city limit they're often not the locality's top priority. Furthermore, not all of these roads would qualify for federal funding through the Local Area Projects Program (LAPP). The MPOs are aware of the congestion and safety issues along these corridors and continue to submit projects to improve these corridors, both for widening and intersection improvements. If these projects are scored high enough in NCDOT's prioritization system they would likely be constructed prior to 2030, where they are currently listed in the Draft 2045 MTP. The MPOs will continue to look for ways to fund these improvements beyond the NCDOT prioritization system.

Q. Can a particular project for roadway widening that has committed funding be removed from the Draft 2045 MTP if a large number of nearby residents submit comments or a petition?

Oftentimes, projects are included in the MTP because they have been approved for funding or actively endorsed by local jurisdictions as one of their priority projects. If a project meets merit standards in the transportation models for assisting with regional, and corridor-specific congestion then it is included in the Plan. If a project has already been approved and included by an MPO Board in previous MTPs, it generally carries forward unless one of the former conditions changes: it no longer meets merit standards, or the local jurisdiction formally requests that it now be removed.

Anytime public comments are received for a project that has moved forward into project development, MPO staff share a copy of those comments with the responsible agency's project team (for example, NCDOT) for their information and consideration.

Q. Are there ways to add some of the projects slated for later horizon categories (decades) to an earlier horizon category; to make some that are long-term near-term instead, without trading out those already slated as near-term?

The MTP must be financially viable. In order to make more improvements sooner, additional local funding for transportation will need to be identified, and most likely that will need to occur on the local or regional level, similar to the recent transit referendums in Durham, Orange, and Wake Counties. There are a number of ways to increase funds for transportation improvements, but

they are all increasing some form for revenue collection whether it is additional tolls, user fees, more bonds, increases in the motor fuel tax, etc.

Q. What are the future plans for tolling roads in the Triangle Region? Can the portions of I-540 that are currently not tolled be changed to tolling to be more equitable to all I-540 and NC 540 users?

The Triangle Expressway which runs between Durham and Wake Counties, is the first toll road in the region. In order to ensure the use of toll roads, and managed lanes in general, is deployed across the region only where appropriate and necessary, largely based on funding constraints for new roads and lane widenings, CAMPO and DCHC have partnered with NCDOT to conduct a Triangle Strategic Tolling Study. More information can be found at www.campo-nc.us. The Study is anticipated to be completed in 2018. There are legal barriers to tolling roadways that are currently not tolled. Tolling can only be utilized on new lanes or roads, not pre-existing lanes, so I-540 lanes that are currently open without tolls cannot be changed to toll lanes.

Q. Have you taken into account self-driving or autonomous vehicles? Won't that have a significant impact on these long-term plans?

Both MPOs continue to monitor developments and potential impacts of new technologies within the transportation system locally and even globally. Advancements in technology and changes to the way we live, grow, and move around the region are a major reason why the MTP, while it is an intensive 18-24 month long planning process, is updated every 4 years.

Additional Comments. The remainder of this appendix addresses additional comments to the two MPOs.

Additional Comments Introduction

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) released the Preferred Option of the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for public comment from November 1, 2017 through December 12, 2017. The public comments that the MPO received for the Preferred Option are compiled in the section below called "Comments by Email."

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization began a final phase of public outreach in the fall of 2017 to inform and receive feedback from members of the community. Any additional CAMPO comments received are included towards the end of this Appendix.

DCHC MPO | Additional Comments

A compilation or summary of public comments that were received at key steps of the 2045 MTP development process are available:

Goals and Objectives – The DCHC MPO conducted an online survey to assist with the creation of the Goals and Objectives and received almost 800 responses. A summary and analysis of the responses is available on the 2045 MTP – Goals Web page:

www.bit.ly/DCHC-MTP-Goals

Alternatives Analysis – The DCHC MPO received comments by email and at the many public workshops that were conducted for the Alternatives Analysis stage of the 2045 MTP. A compilation of those comments is available on the 2045 MTP Alternatives Web page:

www.bit.ly/DCHC-MTP-Alternatives

Preferred Option -- The DCHC MPO released the Preferred Option of the 2045 MTP for public comment from November 1, 2017 through December 12, 2017. The MPO has not yet officially published the comments received for the Preferred Option and therefore a compilation of those comments are presented in the following section.

DCHC MPO | Comments by Email for the Preferred Option

11/01/17

I have the following comments on the 2045 MTP:

- * I would like to see the project to widen US 15-501 Bypass between MLK and I-85 advanced from the 2045 MTP to an earlier date, or at least have interim safety improvements added at the Cameron Blvd and Cornwallis Rd interchanges to extend the merge lanes for safety. I see regular and growing congestion on this route on my daily commute.
 - * I would like to see improvements to the Durham Freeway (NC 147) through downtown advanced to address current and growing congestion.
 - * I would like to see widening of I-85 from Sparger Rd to I-40 advanced from the 2045 MTP to an earlier date.
 - * I would like to see the Wake-Durham CRT (2035 version) extended to LaSalle St. or Neal Rd rather than ending at Fulton St. to better serve west Durham.
- Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Todd Patton

11/04/17

Hi, please provide rail access directly to RDU airport and RTP work areas from Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Durham. Other sprawling cities do this, we can to!

Thanks

Matthew Barton

11/07/17

To whom it may concern.

Thank you for your willingness to hear from the public. I applaud much of your aims and goals. It seems you are working to do what is best for Durham and surrounding areas. I have only a few comments, which I hope will be received in the best possible light.

My main comment: stop prioritizing cars. For over half of a century, cars have dominated our landscape. So much of our local and state budget is spent on cars and infrastructure for cars -- hundreds of millions of dollars, if I am not mistaken. Yet car-culture never brings a good return on its investment. It contributes to pollution and hurts the environment, it allows people to sit in their cars and get sicker and fatter, it prevents people from being in public together by keeping us separated in our little tin boxes, and so many other terrible things. It is now time to turn things around, to make cities for people not cars. The reason why idealized cities like Paris, Amsterdam, NY, San Francisco, Barcelona, etc. are ideal is because they do not prioritize cars but people. But it all started with the will to put people first, machines last.

I am writing to encourage you to prioritize walking, biking, and public transit, especially trains. The highways in NC are packed. As more and more people come here, they are just going to be stuffed more and more. And they cannot get much bigger. How much space is wasted by roads and parking lots? Car-culture is far too expensive and unsustainable. The way to make cities sustainable, diverse, and democratic cities is to prioritize sustainable, diverse, and democratic forms of transit. Again, this means walking, biking, and public transit. Want to know why I never go to Raleigh? Because there is no reliable, easy transit running from early in the morning to late at night? The drive into Raleigh feels like a death trap. I avoid it at all costs. But I would love to see the NC Symphony, attend the Art museum (by the way, there is NO public transit to the state art museum; what an embarrassment!), and visit restaurants and shops. A solution: a commuter train.

I know much of this is in the long term plans for the area. But why is this long term? You have been spending billions on roads for cars for decades. How about other people get a chance for a while? How about we stuff funding entitled drivers and give hardworking people who cannot afford or do not want to use cars? How about a fair and equal transit system in 5 years, not 45 years. The will is there. We want trains, better buses, more walking and biking paths (and that means separated cycle-tracks, not deadly sharrows or painted lanes).

If you have any questions or responses, please let me know. The Triangle can be a beautiful place, but there is much that needs to happen. Let's not wait 45 years. Let's start this tomorrow.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ryan J. Johnson

11/07/17

The Triangle Area RPO has the following comments on the draft DCHC MPO 2045 MTP, with regard to projects that touch the MPO/RPO boundary:

* In Orange County, TARPO staff supports the idea of improvements on NC 54 approaching the DCHC/TARPO boundary west of Carrboro, and we would expect these improvements to ultimately be based on the recommendations of the currently-ongoing NC 54 corridor study. The 2013 Orange County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (RPO portion) shows a need for future improvements in this corridor extending west from the MPO/RPO boundary to Orange Grove Road (outside the DCHC boundary). Our current CTP shows a recommended four-lane facility in this corridor, but there is a good possibility this could change based on the results of the corridor study analysis. Even though the recommendation in the draft MTP would not match the recommendation shown in TARPO's adopted CTP, this recommendation does appear to be consistent with more recent thinking about the NC 54 corridor if it primarily serves as a placeholder for the future recommendations that arise from the corridor study.

* In Chatham County, TARPO staff supports the idea of improvements on NC 751 approaching the DCHC/TARPO boundary. Please note that the 2016 Chatham County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (RPO portion) recommends a future four-lane cross-section for NC 751 from the MPO/RPO boundary southward to US 64. This is in contrast to the three-lane modernization improvements recommended in the draft MTP. While TARPO staff recognizes the fiscal constraints of the MTP process and the impact this has on the ability to include desired projects in the current plan, we would request that you continue to consider a four-lane widening possibility on this road in future planning and project development decisions, in order to match up with the desired intentions on the RPO side of the boundary.

* In Chatham County, the recommended improvements on US 15-501 appear to be consistent with the improvements recommended on the RPO side of the boundary, and TARPO staff supports their inclusion in the MTP.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Matt Day, AICP CTP
Principal Planner
Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization
Triangle J Council of Governments

11/27/17

Hi. I'm 42, and a Raleigh native. Do I read this map correctly that there are NO plans to widen Hopson Rd between 54/Miami to Davis Dr from 2 to 4 lanes (with center turn lane) between now and 2045?? Or will this fall on Town of Morrisville and is out of scope for CAMPO? If there are no plans to widen Hopson, I highly protest! This (I think less than 1/2 mile) stretch of road is a MAJOR bottleneck to traffic flow.

thank you,
David

Hi Andy. I get it that this road segment is in the plan, but how I read it suggests Hopson will not be widened until closer to 2045... the END of this planning date range. That's potentially 28 years away. In what year does this widening of Hopson actually take place?? How about the year on widening of 70 out to 540? That's already way way overdue.

Yes I'm very aware of the grade separation on this road and others and I am a big fan... if only we actually used rail here for passengers (outside of the 3 daily Amtrak trains between Raleigh and Charlotte). I'm thankful for the added safety.

The attempts to get light rail by the TTA since 1993 have been a curse and a sad state of affairs in this region. To watch Charlotte (working and expanding) and now Dur/Ch (plans approved?) get a light rail and our capital city still does not infuriates me. Even worse is not having that light rail Phase 1 to RDU bc the RDUAA thinks they are better than having rail... they lose their parking revenue... suggesting to me CAMPO and RDUAA haven't been aligned or even communicating.

This is why mass transit exists, to connect and interconnect. Someone or some group is conceding far too much to only do commuter rail and buses. Sorry folks, I feel CAMPO needs to step it up a notch. There have been some planning holes since the early 1990s in my opinion or the mass transit plan would be much more aligned and RDU would be on board with light rail phase 1... and we might have even have it running by now!

Nothing in your response related to why New Hill gets widened in this time frame? What traffic bottlenecks exist on that road? I've only ever seen a tiny bit of congestion at the US 1 interchange bc of it being an old bridge and stop signs...

Who participates in making these plans? Is it a contracted 3rd party with click counters on the roads or real people driving real road segments who understand transit? I don't mean that to insult, I ask out of curiosity.

Thank you,
David
